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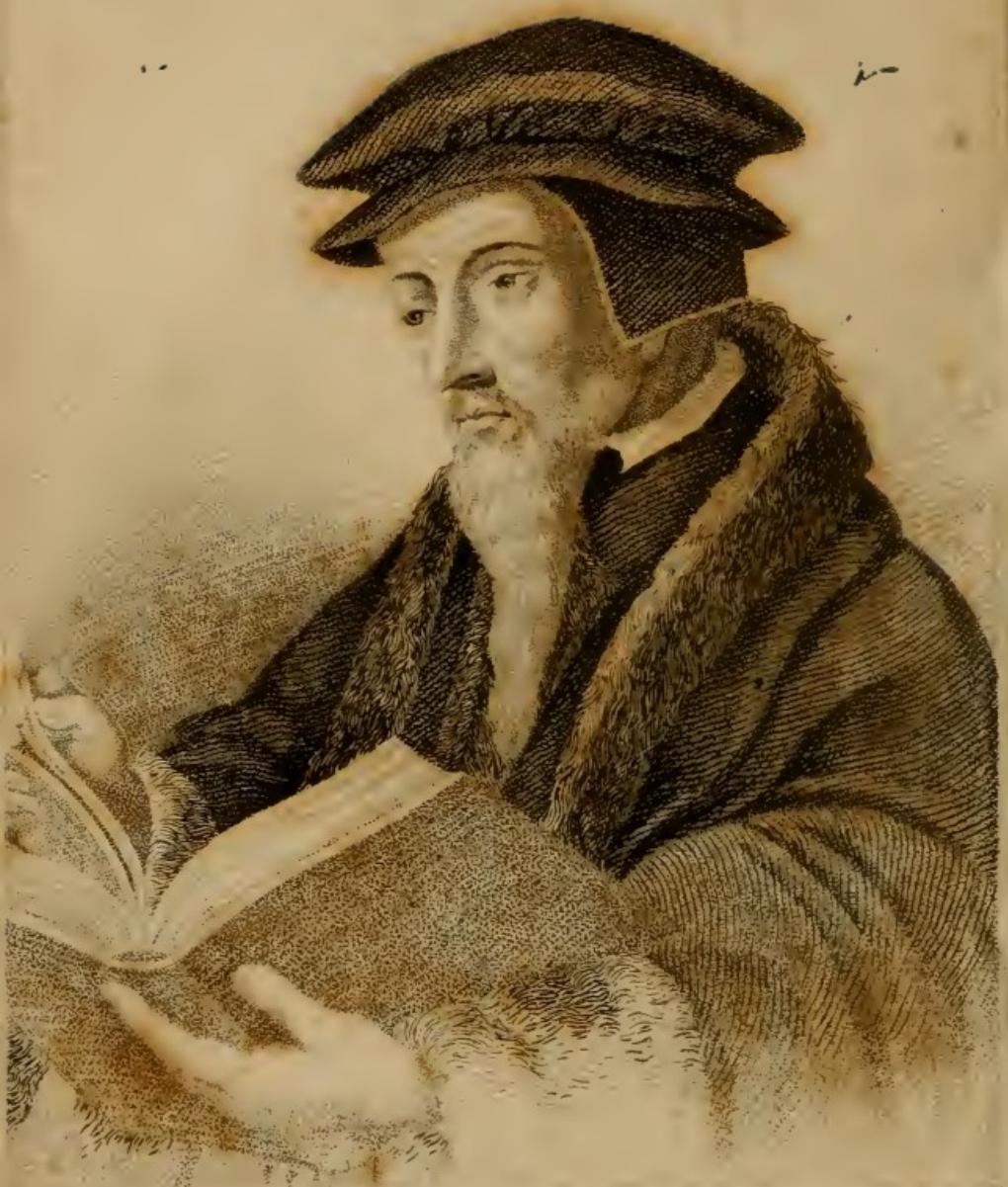












Calvin?

164

# COMMENTARY

ON THE

## EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY JOHN CALVIN.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,  
HIS LIFE, BY THEODORE BEZA.

TRANSLATED  
BY FRANCIS SIBSON, A.B.

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THERE is perhaps no period since the days of the apostles, which has a greater claim on the careful inquiry of the philosopher and the Christian than that of the reformers. It teaches us one very important truth, as if written with a sun-beam, that the Bible, and the Bible alone, was the only certain engine by which the long-formed, powerful bulwarks of the Roman Catholic church were first shaken, and a way opened for the glorious truths of the gospel to heal and convert the nations. Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the whole glorious army of reformers used no other successful weapons for establishing the kingdom of Christ, which flourished more extensively and triumphantly in exact proportion to the confidence that was placed in the all-conquering power of the word of the King of glory. The love-destroying horrors of persecution, which so completely marred the beauty of the reformation, derived all its strength, nay, its very existence, from the power of the civil magistrate, to which the punishment of blasphemy was intrusted, as it had been committed, under the Roman hierarchy, to the relentless arm of the pope and his minions. The glorious, never-ending conquest of faith, hope, and love, were achieved by the all-searching records of eternal truth.

Every careful reader of the various catechisms and articles of faith, which were published in every part of Europe, where Protestantism commenced, must be struck with the uncommon harmony that pervades all these important and invaluable documents.

The doctrines of the Trinity, of original sin, of justification by faith, of regeneration, sanctification, the vicarious sacrifice of Christ's death, the assurance of faith, the perseverance of the saints, of a particular providence, predestination, and the divine influences of the Holy Spirit, were taught with the utmost assiduity, and the most unshaken confidence in their truth, by all the distinguished leaders in the reformation. I need not state the glorious results which followed the preaching of such a system of doctrines, since they must be well known to all my readers.

Have not the same doctrines produced the same effects ever since ? Has not the Rev. Mr. Romaine, who was debarred from preaching at Oxford, in consequence of his sermon on justification by faith, proved to all England that it is a doctrine of a standing or falling church, since the number of evangelical preachers in this part of the kingdom has been gradually increasing from that period ? Did not the Rev. Mr. Walker, when fellow of Trinity-college, Dublin—for whose ministerial labours and parental kindness I must ever cherish the warmest and most heart-felt gratitude—call forth the same spirit in Ireland, where he was expelled, for preaching on justification by faith, from every pulpit within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Dublin. Where shall we now find, in the British empire, a more firm and unshaken phalanx of truly pious ministers of the gospel than in our sister kingdom ? They have borne up with Christian patience under many severe and heavy privations, and shown that the doctrines of the cross alone can give true heroism to all the followers of the Lamb, who know assuredly the truth of the motto, *No cross, no crown*, which has been so ably illustrated by Mr. Penn.

To what class of preachers in the church of Scotland are we to look for all that is holy, all that is

pure, all that is Christian ? To the bold and fearless proclaimers of the doctrine of justification by faith, and the strenuous advocates of the Westminster confession of faith, and the larger and shorter catechisms. What class of Dissenters is the most powerful in assisting to advance the cause of God and truth in every corner of the empire ? The advocates of reformation principles. Have not all our missionary, our Bible, our tract societies sprung from ministers who entertained the same Protestant views ?

Nor are the leaders in the reformation to be admired merely for what they taught and preached ; for they deserve our praise for what *negatively* they did not inculcate on their followers. The doctrine of the personal reign of Christ on earth is not introduced into any of their generally received confessions, and articles of faith. The gift of tongues, and of healing, &c., never seems once to have entered their minds ; nor did they think of *harmonizing* with the church of Rome in the working of pretended miracles. They were assured that prophecies had failed, that tongues and miracles had ceased ; but faith, hope, and charity, with all their beauty, and all their soul-inspiring energy, when taught by the influences of the Spirit of holiness and comfort, were cherished by them as the only sure directors and guides of the sons and daughters of Adam, in their pilgrimage to the regions of everlasting rest, peace, and joy.

An earnest desire to assist in disclosing the views of one of the most influential reformers,\* who has, I am sorry to say, been shamefully calumniated

\* “ Calvin justly enjoyed a distinguished reputation, and was a scholar of the first order. He wrote with as much elegance in Latin as a dead language admits ; and the extraordinary purity of his French style is even now admired by our skilful critics, and gives his writings a decided superiority over the greatest part of his contemporaries.”—*D'Alembert.*

in this land, celebrated for liberal principles and feelings, induced me to undertake this translation of Calvin's Commentary, on the Romans, written for the purpose of illustrating the second edition of his Institutes, and of opening a door to the most hidden treasures of the only book, in which the Sovereign of the universe, and the Fountain of truth has deigned to converse with sinful dust and ashes.\*

I need make no remark on the subject of translation to such as have tried that kind of literary labour. I have endeavoured to make my translation faithful to the original; and trust this fidelity may form an apology for any deficiency in point of elegance.

I feel a difficulty in addressing my various and numerous friends and subscribers on account of the debt of gratitude I owe, and the length of time which has elapsed since I first commenced this work. Such has been the uncommon assistance I have experienced, that no language can convey my feelings of thankfulness and of cheering consolation thus afforded under some of my heaviest bereavements and trials, in consequence of which I have been so long delayed in completing this publication

The very great encouragement which I experienced from my most affectionate friends in Cumberland, my native county—which is not less distinguished for hospitality, kindness, and independence, than for natural beauties—from my kind and active friends in London, and every part of England, which I have visited, must be always cherished in my remembrance with feelings of pleasure and delight. It is high time

† “I hold the memory of Calvin in high veneration, and frequently consult his Commentaries,” “which abound in solid discussions of theological subjects, and practical improvements; and his interpretations adorn the books even of those who repay the obligation by reproaching their master.”

*Bishop Horsley—Preface to Poole's Synopsis.*

for this part of the island to rest satisfied with nothing short of a parochial system of education, founded on the Scriptures, and improved by regular examinations; and to exert every nerve "in restoring again the discipline of the primitive church, which is much to be wished," as stated in our Commination Service.

The liberal support which I received in various parts of Scotland, and particularly in Edinburgh, where, for many years, I enjoyed the kindness of some of my best and warmest friends, can never be forgotten, and must always be remembered with a deep sense of gratitude. I trust the time is not distant, when every exertion will be used to put an end to patronage in that kingdom, which was so justly opposed by one of its ablest ministers, the late Rev. Dr. Thompson, whose warm-heartedness and deep interest in my welfare I must ever cherish with feelings of the liveliest affection. Let the whole Scotch nation rise as one man for the attaining of this most important point, and they may rest assured the time is not far distant, when they will gain their desired object.

I now turn to Ireland, in whose metropolis I completed my education, and where I spent the first day of last year with some of my warmest, and one of my earliest and much loved friends, Dr. Litton. The Provost, most of the Fellows of Trinity-college, nearly all the clergymen of the church of Ireland, as well as the ministers among the Dissenters, and the various other persons on whom I called, gladdened my heart by the cordiality with which they favoured my undertaking. Shall nothing be done by Britain for the purpose of draining the bogs, improving the roads, making rail-ways, and encouraging the agriculture, the manufactures, the collieries, and the mines of this part of the empire? If we can afford to pay twenty millions to the West Indies, with a view to wipe away the foul stain of slavery, we ought to be prepared to

advance a sum sufficient to give employment to the loyal, kind-hearted, liberal inhabitants of Erin. Is there a candid Englishman who has enjoyed the means of knowing Ireland from the days of Spencer —nay, long before—to the present, that must not be compelled to say, England has acted towards Ireland, on all occasions, as if she were a conquered country? A change of ministry, under any parliament, makes severer only more severe. What a heart-rending anomaly, that the freest nation under the canopy of heaven should have treated one of the richest and nearest parts of its dominions with such unrelenting and unmerited rigour. Has not the Ruler of worlds stripped Spain, and Portugal, and Holland of the greatest part of their colonial possessions on account of the oppression used towards them; and is England justified in expecting that similar punishment will not be awarded to similar conduct?

The period, it is to be hoped, is not far distant when the various prejudices and prepossessions entertained by the different parts of the kingdom against each other will be sunk in mutual love and kindness. A more enlarged and intimate acquaintance with Scripture, and a steady adherence to its precepts, will powerfully assist in hastening this event, by improving in each what is imperfect, supplying what is deficient, correcting what is erroneous, and purifying what is corrupt.

I cannot conclude without heartily wishing my subscribers all happiness; and may they long enjoy here the smiles of the Redeemer of sinners, and be fitted by him for an inheritance among the saints in glory!

London, Jan. 1, 1834.

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## CORRECTIONS.

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### LIFE OF CALVIN.

- Page 9. In the beginning of the 4th line from the bottom, insert *who* before the word "were."
- Page 42. Line 16th from the bottom, for "minister," read *monster*.

### COMMENTARY.

- Page 110. Line 5th from the bottom, for "and" read *who*.
- Page 161. Line 5th from the bottom, for "than which" read *than what*.
- Page 177. Line 8th from the top, for "his," read *this*.
- Page 187. Line 7th, for "any" read *no*.
- Page 196. Last line, for "in God," read *to God*.

### CHARACTER OF CALVIN.

- Page 605. Conclusion of the 5th line from the bottom, for "forty-two letters," read *four letters*.
- Page 613. Line 6th from the bottom, for "with less," read *ruthless*.



THE LIFE  
OF  
JOHN CALVIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF BEZA.

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JOHN CALVIN, Cauvin, or Chauvin, was born at Noyon, a celebrated city in Picardy, or the country adjoining, on the 10th of July, 1509. His father Gerard Calvin, and his mother Jeanne Franc, were in respectable circumstances, and of virtuous unblemished character. His father possessed a considerable share of judgment, and of skill in giving advice, and was therefore beloved by many of the nobility in that part of the country; on which account his son, though at the expense of the father, received a very liberal education with the children of the Mommors, a family of the first rank in that place. He afterwards accompanied them to Paris for the purpose of prosecuting his studies, where he had for his tutor, in the College de la Marche, Mathurin Cordier, distinguished for learning and strict integrity. He had always been esteemed in a great number of the schools of France as an excellent teacher of youth, and died at Geneva, September 8th, 1564, (the same year with Calvin), aged 85, in the discharge of his professional duties as instructor of the youth of that city. (a)

Calvin was removed from the College de la Marche to that of Montaigu, and had for his tutor a Spaniard of no small attainments in learning, who cultivated with so much success the talents of his pupil, naturally very acute, as to advance him from the grammar class, in consequence of surpassing his

schoolfellows in this branch of education, to the study of logic, and of other, as they are termed, liberal arts. His father had from the beginning destined Calvin for the study of divinity, which he considered to be congenial with the bent of his son's inclination, because even in his tender years he was in a surprising manner devoted to religion, and a stern reprobate of all the vices of his companions. Some Catholics, whose testimony cannot be doubted, acquainted me with this fact many years after Calvin had attained great celebrity.

His father, therefore, as he had destined his son for divinity, obtained from the Bishop of Noyon a benefice in the Cathedral church, as it is termed, of that city, and afterwards the parochial cure of the village Pont l'Eveque, the birth-place of Gerard Calvin the father, from whence he had subsequently removed to the neighbouring city of Noyon. It is certain that John Calvin delivered some sermons at Pont l'Eveque to the people before he left France, or received under the papal hierarchy orders in any other way than by tonsure. This plan was interrupted by a change in the mind of both, for the father thought the law opened a surer road to riches and honours, and the son, being instructed in the pure religion by one of his relations, Robert d'Olivet, to whom the French church is indebted for a translation of the Bible from Hebrew, printed at Neuchatel, devoted himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and becoming disgusted with the superstitions of the church of Rome, began to detach himself from every sacred office in her communion. (b)

Calvin went therefore to Orleans for the purpose of prosecuting his studies in civil law, which was taught by Peter de l'Etoile, the most distinguished of all the French civilians; and his progress in a short time was so surprising that, as he frequently supplied the chairs of the professors themselves, he was esteemed a teacher rather than a scholar. The degree of Doctor, free of expense, was offered him when on the point of leaving, with the unanimous and most flattering testimony of all the professors to his merits, and his claims upon

the University. In the midst of his other labours, he made so great a progress in the study of the Scriptures, which he at the same time diligently prosecuted, that all those who were zealous to be instructed in the reformed religion, frequently applied to him for information, and were struck with deep admiration of the extent of his erudition, and of the ardour of his pursuits. Some of his surviving associates and fellow-students assert, that he was accustomed at this period of his life, after taking a very frugal supper, to pursue his lucubrations till midnight, and employ his morning hours in bed reviewing, and as it were, digesting the studies of the preceding night; nor did he easily allow any interruption to this train of meditation. These long-continued watchings assisted him indeed in attaining solid erudition, and improving an excellent memory, but there is every reason for thinking that in return he contracted a weakness of the digestive organs, productive of various diseases, and finally even of an untimely death.

Calvin determined to attend the lectures of Andrew Alciat, the first civilian without doubt of the age, who in consequence of accepting an invitation from Italy to the University of Bourges, settled there, and much increased its celebrity by his talents. During his residence at this city Calvin formed an intimate friendship, on account of his religion and learning, with Melchior Wolmar, a native of Rothweil in Germany, and at that time public professor of Greek in Bourges. It affords me very great pleasure to speak of this distinguished scholar, because he was my sole preceptor from childhood to mature age; nor can I ever sufficiently praise his learning, piety, and other virtues, but especially his admirable skill in the instruction of youth. By his advice and assistance Calvin attained an acquaintance with Greek literature, and was desirous to acknowledge the remembrance of his obligation to all future ages, by dedicating to Wolmar his Commentaries on the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians! While Calvin pursued his professional studies he never neglected the holy

Scriptures, and occasionally preached at Ligniers, a small town in the Province of Berri, in the presence, and with the approbation of the head of that department. (c)

The intelligence of the sudden death of his father recalled Calvin from Bourges to his native country. Not long after he removed from Noyon to Paris, and in his twenty-fourth year published his excellent Commentary on Seneca's Epistle concerning Clemency. Calvin was certainly very much delighted with this very serious author, whose sentiments evidently harmonized with his own moral character. (d)

Calvin, during the few months he was at Paris, became acquainted with all the zealous supporters of the reformed religion ; and we have frequently heard him afterwards praise, among the rest, Steven de la Forge, a distinguished merchant, subsequently burned for the name of Christ, on account of his remarkable piety. He has also eulogized this martyr in his treatise against the libertines. Calvin, from that time, abandoning all other studies, devoted himself to the service of God, to the very great satisfaction of all those pious characters, who then held their meetings privately in Paris.

Not long after this an opportunity presented itself for the display of his strenuous efforts in the cause of the reformed religion. Nicholas Cop, son of William Cop, physician to the king, and a citizen of Basle, was at that time appointed in the usual manner rector of the University of Paris. Calvin prepared for him an oration to be delivered according to custom on the 1st of November, when the Roman Catholics celebrated the feast of All Saints; and in this he discussed the subject of religion with greater purity and more boldness, than the hierarchy had before experienced. This excited the displeasure of the Sorbonne, and the parliament was so much offended as to cite the rector to appear. At first the rector prepared, with his officers, to attend the summons, but being admonished by friends, as he was on his way, to avoid his adversaries, he returned home, left the kingdom, and retired to Basle. A party proceeded to Calvin's lodgings in the College

de Fortret, but happily not finding him at home, they seized among his papers a considerable number of letters from his friends, and the lives of several of them were thus exposed to very imminent danger. Such was the severity of the judges against the church of Christ at that period, and the violence of John Morin was peculiarly striking, whose name is yet distinguished for uncommon cruelty. The queen of Navarre, only sister of Francis 1st, a princess of extraordinary talents, afforded the reformer on this occasion marked protection, and the Lord dispelled the storm by her intercession. She invited Calvin to her court, received him with great honour, and gave him an audience. (e)

Calvin left Paris, went to Saintonge, and assisted one of his friends, at whose request he composed some short Christian exhortations, which were presented to certain parishes to be read as homilies, that the people might gradually be enticed to a zeal in the investigation of the truth. About this time he came to Nerac in Gascony, on a visit to James le Fevre, of Estaples, now far advanced in years, who had been defended by the same queen of Navarre, when in danger of his life from the vain and foolish doctors of the Sorbonne, for his having introduced great improvements in mathematics and other branches of philosophy in the University of Paris, after a long and very violent opposition, and for his assisting to rout out the scholastic theology. She had also provided for him in Nerac a town within her jurisdiction. The good old man received and saw young Calvin with great kindness, and predicted that he would become a distinguished instrument in restoring the kingdom of heaven in France. (f)

Not long after Calvin returned to Paris, as if called there by the hand of God himself; for the impious Servetus was even then disseminating his heretical poison against the sacred Trinity in that city. He professed to desire nothing more earnestly than to have an opportunity for entering into discussion with Calvin, who waited long for Servetus, the place and time for an interview having been appointed, with

great danger to his own life, since he was at that time under the necessity of being concealed on account of the incensed rage of his adversaries. Calvin was disappointed in his expectations of meeting Servetus, who wanted courage to endure even the sight of his opponent.

The year 1534 was distinguished by many horrid cruelties inflicted upon the reformers. Gerard de Rousel, Doctor of the Sorbonne, affording at that time great assistance to the study of religion, and Couraut, of the order of St. Augustin, who, having been for two years under the patronage of the queen of Navarre, promoted very much the cause of the gospel in Paris, were not only dragged out of their pulpits, but thrown into prison. The indignation of the infatuated Francis 1st, was so much enraged on account of certain papers against the mass dispersed through the city, and affixed to his chamber door, that having appointed a public procession, he walked uncovered before it, bearing a lighted torch, as if in expiation of the crime, accompanied by his three sons. He ordered eight martyrs to be burned alive in four principal quarters of the city, and declared with a solemn oath that he would not spare his own children, if by any chance infected with these, as he called them, most execrable heresies. (g)

Calvin, beholding with grief such a spectacle of woe, determined to leave France, after he had first published at Orleans an excellent little work, intitled "Psychopannychia," against an error which commenced in the earliest ages of the church, and was again revived by those who taught that the soul sleeps when in a state of separation from the body.

With an intention of leaving France he went by way of Lorraine towards Basle with the young gentleman at whose house, as already stated, he resided at Saintonge. Near Metz he was plundered by a servant, who saddled one of the strongest horses, and fled with so much speed that he could not be apprehended, after he had perfidiously robbed his masters of all things necessary for their journey, and reduced them to great difficulties. The other servant, however, lent

them ten crowns, which enabled them to proceed with considerable inconvenience to Strasburgh, and thence to Basle. He formed an intimate friendship in this city with Simon Grinée, and Wolfgang Capito, men of the greatest celebrity, and devoted himself to the study of the Hebrew language. Though very desirous to do his utmost that he might remain in obscurity, as appears from one of Bucer's letters to Calvin the following year, he was under the necessity of publishing what he called the Institutes of the Christian Religion, and the rudiment of much the largest of his works. For when the German princes, who had supported the gospel, and whose friendship he then courted, were indignant at Francis 1st, for the murder of his Protestant subjects, the only wise remedy proposed by Bellay-Langé, which he resolved to adopt, was his declaration that he had merely punished the Anabaptists, who boast only in their own spirit as the divine word, and despise all magistrates. Calvin, feeling indignant at the calumny with which the new religion was branded, seized this opportunity for publishing what I consider an incomparable work. He prefixed also an admirable preface to the king himself, and if he could from any circumstance have been induced to read it, I am either very much mistaken or a great wound would, even at that period, have been inflicted on the whore of Babylon. For the king differed in many respects from his successors; he was a very acute judge of the situation of affairs, possessed an excellent talent in detecting the truth, was a patron of learned men, and his inclination did not lead him to hate persons of the reformed religion. But neither his own sins, nor the sins of his people, which were even then menaced with the speedy arrival of God's indignation, allowed him to hear, much less to read this work.

After completing his Institutes, and faithfully performing the duties he owed his native country, he felt a desire to pay, as if at a distance, his respects to Italy, and to visit Renée, the Duchess of Ferrara, and daughter of Louis 12th, king of

France, whose piety was at that time very much praised. He, therefore, waited upon her, and at the same time so confirmed her in a sincere zeal for religion, to the utmost of his abilities according to the existing state of affairs, that she continued ever after to entertain a sincere affection for him during his life; and now also, as his survivor, exhibits striking marks of her gratitude after his death. (*h*)

From Italy, whose territories he entered, to use his own language, only that he might leave them, Calvin returned to France, where he settled all his affairs, and brought along with him Anthony Calvin, his only surviving brother. His intention was to return to Basle or Strasburgh, but the wars compelled him to make his route through Dauphiny and Savoy, all other countries having been completely closed against his passage. This was the cause of his coming without his own intention to Geneva, where, as future events proved, he was conducted by a divine hand. For the Gospel had a short time before been wonderfully introduced into that city by the joint exertions of two very distinguished characters, William Farel, a gentleman of Dauphiny, educated, not in a monastery, as was reported by some, but in the academy of James Fabre, of Estaples, and Peter Viret, of Orb, in the Territory of Berne, and Friburgh, whose labours were afterwards most abundantly blessed of the Lord. Calvin, passing through Geneva, visited these good men as a matter of course, on which occasion Farel, with his usual heroic spirit, after urging him at some length to continue, and share their labours at Geneva without going farther, thus addressed Calvin, when he manifested no disposition to comply with the proposal: “I denounce unto you, in the name of Almighty God, that if, under the pretext of prosecuting your studies, you refuse to labour with us in this work of the Lord, the Lord will curse you, as seeking yourself rather than Christ.” Calvin, terrified by this dreadful denunciation, surrendered himself to the disposal of the presbytery and magistrates, by whose votes, and the consent of the people, he was chosen not only preacher, which at first he

had refused, but also appointed professor of divinity, which office he accepted in the month of August, 1536.

This year is also distinguished by a closer alliance between Geneva and Berne, and by the accession of Lausanne to Christ, where a free disputation was held against the Catholics, which Calvin also attended. Calvin then published a certain formulary of doctrine suited to the state of the church of Geneva, which was only just emerging from the corruptions of popery. He added also a catechism, not, as it is now, distinguished into questions and answers, but much shorter, comprising the chief articles of religion. Afterwards he endeavoured, in conjunction with Farel and Couraut, to settle the state of the church in Geneva, the greater part of his colleagues, from timidity, avoiding all disturbance, while some even secretly opposed the work of the Lord, which Calvin beheld with deep concern. He induced the citizens to convene an assembly of the whole people, for the purpose of openly abjuring popery, and of swearing to the Christian doctrine and discipline included in a few articles.

Many refused to do this in a city not yet completely liberated from the artifices of the Duke of Savoy, and from the yoke of Antichrist, and where various factions still continued to rage. On the 20th July, however, in the year 1537, the Lord granted that the senate and people of Geneva, openly preceded by a public scribe, should swear to the articles both of the doctrine and discipline of the Christian religion. But Satan, exasperated by such proceedings, and expecting that he should be able, under the pretext of religion, to accomplish what he had in an infinite variety of ways attempted, by means of foreign enemies, without effect, excited the Anabaptists in the first place to oppose them, and afterwards Peter Caroli, whose character and conduct will be examined in the sequel, were not only prepared to disturb, but also entirely to destroy, and to subvert the work of the Lord, either because what had now been effected very much displeased Satan, or else he anticipated the results which followed. But as

the event itself proved, the Lord had prevented his schemes, for Calvin and his colleagues summoned the Anabaptists to a public and free disputation, and confuted them on the 18th of March, in the year 1537, from the word of God alone, in so forcible a manner, and with such uncommon success, that from this time they almost entirely disappeared in the church of Geneva. Peter Caroli, the other disturber of the church, excited greater and more long-continued disturbances, the principal of which I will here merely state, since the whole history of the controversy may be fully collected from one of Calvin's letters to Grinée. The Sorbonne, which had nurtured this excessively impudent person, afterwards expelled him as an heretic, though his conduct had not merited such treatment at her hands. He first came to Geneva, then to Lausanne, and afterwards to Neuchatel, the spirit of Satan always so accompanying him that in every place he left the impressions of certain marks of his mean and base conduct.

On finding himself convicted by the Protestants, he passed over to the Catholics, and afterwards deserting them, again joined the reformers, as Farel clearly describes his arts in a long letter written to Calvin. At last he openly began to accuse every one distinguished for excellence of character, but particularly charged Farel, Calvin, and Viret, as if they entertained false notions concerning the sacred Trinity. A very full synod was held at Berne to consider the truth of the accusation, by which Peter Caroli was proved guilty of calumny; he afterwards gradually deserted the Protestants, and went to Metz, having been suborned for the purpose of impeding the work of the Lord begun with so much success in that city by Farrel. After this he wrote a letter, in which he openly attacked the reformed, that the hungry dog, having excited undoubted hopes of his apostacy, might gain a living. He was however sent back to Rome to make a public confession of his conduct to the beast itself, where, being treated with contempt, and suffering both from poverty, and a loathsome disease, he was received with difficulty into a hospital,

and the wages of sin—death, was paid him even by the son of sin. Such was the end of this unhappy person.

In the mean time Calvin published two very elegant letters in the year 1537, because he observed many in France to be well acquainted indeed with divine truth in their minds, who still indulged their own corrupt feelings, under the pretence of its being sufficient to worship Christ in the heart while they attended mass; one was directed to Nicholas Cheminhus, of Orleans, concerning the necessity of avoiding idolatry, whose friendship and hospitality he had very much enjoyed at Orleans, and who was afterwards appointed to a civil office in the Province of la Maine. Another related to the popish priesthood, written to Gerard Rousel, already mentioned, who, after the tumult at Paris, was first presented with an abbacy, and then a bishopric, and afterwards, so far from pursuing the even tenour of his Christian course, gradually undermined, as domestic chaplain, the faith of the Queen of Navarre.

But violent domestic seditions were raised against Calvin whilst engaged in these labours. The gospel, as we have already stated, had been received into the city, and popery abjured. But many disgraceful crimes still continued to reign among various persons in a city, which had been for so many years under the power of monks, and of a profligate clergy; and ancient quarrels, which commenced during the wars with the Duke of Savoy, were still fostered among some of the principal families. He first endeavoured, without effecting any thing, to remove these disorders by gentle admonition, afterwards by severely reproving the stubborn and refractory. The evil increased so much that the city was divided by the seditious conduct of private individuals into various factions, and a considerable number altogether refused to join that body of the people who had abjured popery. At last affairs came to such a height, that Farel, Calvin, and Couraut, (who, as we have already stated, after boldly defending the truth at Paris, was brought by Calvin first to

Basle and afterwards to Geneva, when he himself was settled there), openly testified that they could not properly administer the Lord's Supper to citizens who lived in such a state of discord, and were so utterly averse to all church discipline. To this also was added another evil, the disagreement of the church of Geneva with that of Berne in certain rites. The churches of Geneva not only used common bread, but had removed all baptismal fonts, as they are called, considering them unnecessary for performing the office of baptism, and had abolished all festivals except Sunday. The synod of Lausanne, compelled by the people of Berne, had decided that Geneva should be requested to restore the use of unleavened bread, the baptismal fonts, and the festivals. The college of the ministers of Geneva considered it right that an audience should be afforded, and on this account another synod was convened at Zurich. Those who had been elected syndics at that time, for this highest office in Geneva is appointed annually, embracing this as a favourable opportunity, became the leaders of the seditious and factious part of the city, and assembled the people. They brought affairs to such a state, that while Calvin and the rest of his colleagues, who held the same views, offered in vain to assign a reason for their conduct, these three faithful servants of God, in consequence of the more virtuous party being outvoted, were ordered to leave the city within two days for refusing to administer the Lord's Supper. When Calvin was informed of the decree of banishment, he said, "Certainly, had I been in the service of men, this would have been a bad reward; but it is well that I have served Him, who never fails to repay his servants whatever he has once promised." \*

Who would not have thought that such measures were calculated to bring certain destruction to the church at Geneva? The event, however, on the other hand, showed that it was

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\* Calvin, according to Spon, had borne his own expenses without receiving any salary.

done by Divine Providence, partly with a view to qualify Calvin, by the various experience he acquired as a faithful servant in other scenes of usefulness, for engaging in still nobler labours, and partly to purge the church of Geneva from much of its corruption, while the leaders in the sedition were overthrown by their own violence. So wonderful does the Lord manifest himself in all his works, but especially in the government of his church. The truth of these remarks was proved by the final result of this transaction. But these three servants of Christ, obeying at that time the edict, while all good men mourned on account of their banishment, proceeded first to Zurich, where a synod being convened of some of the Swiss churches, means were used according to its decree, by the intercession of the government of Berne, to try to influence the minds of the governors and people of Geneva. This attempt was of no avail, and Calvin went first to Basle, and next to Strasburg, where with the sanction of the senate of that city he was appointed professor of divinity, with a liberal stipend, by Bucer, Capito, Hedio, Niger, and the rest of their colleagues, men of the highest eminence, who then illuminated, as so many shining gems, the established church of that place. He not only taught divinity there with the greatest applause of all good men, but with the consent of the senate planted also a French church, and introduced such discipline as he approved. Satan, thus disappointed in his expectation, beheld Calvin welcomed by another city, on his expulsion from the church of Geneva, where in a short time a new church was formed. In the mean while Satan, using every exertion to subvert entirely the church erected at Geneva, which had been shaken to its very foundation, found in a short time some idle characters, who, for the purpose of concealing the great iniquity of the decree under the pretext of religion, determined that unleavened bread should be substituted for common, formerly used at the Lord's table, with a view to afford an opportunity for fomenting new dissensions. And the great enemy of the church would have succeeded in

this plan, had not Calvin seriously admonished some good men, so displeased with the change as to consider it their duty to refrain from taking the Lord's Supper, not to contend about a subject in itself indifferent. The use of unleavened bread commenced in the manner now stated, nor did Calvin on his future restoration think it worth while to make any opposition to the practice, though he did not attempt to conceal his approval of the use of common bread.

Another still more dangerous evil commenced in the year 1539, and was at the same time extinguished by Calvin's diligence. James Sadolet, Bishop of Carpentras, a man of great eloquence, which he chiefly abused to suppress the light of the truth, and who had been presented with a cardinal's hat, with a view to enable a character, whose moral conduct was in other respects regular, to decorate a false religion in the best possible colours. He, observing the opportunity then offered, and thinking he would easily lead away a flock deprived of such distinguished pastors, adducing also as an excuse his vicinity to Geneva, for Carpentras is a city in Dauphiny, which joins on Savoy, sent letters addressed to his dearly beloved brethren, as he termed them, the magistracy, council, and people of Geneva, in which he omitted nothing that might be useful in recalling them to the bosom of Rome, that great harlot. There was no person at Geneva able to answer this work, and it would in all probability, if not written in a foreign language, have been productive of great mischief to that city in its present circumstances. But when Calvin read this letter at Strasburg, he forgot all the injuries he had received, and immediately answered it with so much truth and eloquence, that Sadolet forthwith gave up the whole business as desperate. But Calvin did not permit so long a period to elapse before he manifested the due affection which he felt as a pastor for his flock at Geneva, who were at that time suffering among their fellow citizens in a very severe manner for the common cause of religion. The excellent letters which he wrote at Strasburg, both in the year

of his expulsion and the following, exhibit striking marks of his affection, in which his whole object is, in an especial manner, to exhort them to repentance before God, to forbearance towards the wicked, to concord and peace with their pastors, and prayer and supplication to the Head of the church. He thus prepares them for the renewed expectation of the splendid shining forth of that much desired pleasant light from the midst of the most horrible darkness, and the event wonderfully proved the truth of his prediction. He then published, in a much more enlarged form, his "Christian Institutions," his "Commentaries upon the Epistle to the Romans," dedicated to his most affectionate friend Simon Grinée, as also a golden Treatise "on the Lord's Supper," for the use of his French congregation at Strasburg, translated afterwards into Latin by Galar. He handled the subject of the Lord's Supper with so much skill and erudition, that it may in a very great measure be considered the means of affording, by the divine blessing, decisive answers to a great variety of most unhappy controversies, in which men of the highest attainments in learning and virtue justly acquiesced.

He had great success in reclaiming many Anabaptists; their principal leaders were Paul Volse, to whom Erasmus had dedicated his "Manual of the Christian Soldier," afterwards a pastor in the church of Strasburg, and John Stor der, of Liege, who subsequently fell a victim to the plague; and Calvin married, by the advice of Bucer, his widow, Idolette de Bure, distinguished for virtue and gravity.

Such were the studies and employments of Calvin at Strasburg till the year 1541, when conferences, appointed by Charles the 5th, were held first at Worms, and afterwards at Ratisbon, for effecting a pacification between the Catholics and Protestants. Calvin was present, by the appointment of the ministers of Strasburg, and was of no small use to the churches in general, particularly to those in his own country. Philip Melancthon and Gaspar Cruciger, of happy memory, were in a peculiar manner delighted with him; the former

often honoured Calvin with the distinctive appellation of "the Divine," and the latter, after holding a private conference with him on the subject of the Lord's Supper, expressly approved of his views.

The time had now arrived when the Lord determined to have pity on his church at Geneva. One of the four syndics, by whose means the decree for banishing the faithful ministers had been passed, being accused of sedition in conducting the affairs of the state, was precipitated, in consequence of his corpulency, when he was endeavouring to escape through a window, and his body was so bruised that he died of his wounds a few days after the accident. Another was beheaded for murder. The other two, accused of having betrayed the interests of the city in an embassy, fled from their country, and were condemned to perpetual exile.

On the expulsion of such offscum from the city, Geneva began to demand its own Farel and Calvin. And when no hopes of recovering Farel from Neuchatel remained, the citizens directed their attention in the most earnest manner to Calvin, and sent a deputation, uniting also the intercession of Zurich, to Strasburg, that they might obtain the consent of its citizens for his removal. The people of Strasburg were very reluctant to part with Calvin, and though his own attachment to the people of Geneva had not been changed, in consequence of the insults offered him by men of the basest characters, yet he disliked all disturbance, and plainly refused to return, because he saw the Lord had blessed his ministry in the church at Strasburg. Bucer and his colleagues testified their very great unwillingness to part with him. The people of Geneva persisting to demand Calvin, Bucer at last thought it right to grant their requests for a limited time; he could not, however, persuade Calvin to yield, until he denounced the severe judgment of Heaven against him, and pressed upon him the consideration of the example of Jonah. But since these things occurred at the time when Calvin and Bucer were engaged by a decree to go to the conferences at Ratisbon, his depar-

ture was deferred, and the Genevese only obtained leave from the inhabitants of Berne to allow Peter Viret to go from Lausanne to Geneva. Calvin returned to the city with more readiness when he found Viret appointed his colleague, whose assistance and counsel would be of great use to him in restoring the church. Thus, after the lapse of a few months, Calvin returned to Geneva on the 13th of September, 1541; all the people, and particularly the senate highly congratulating themselves on the occasion, and acknowledging, in an impressive manner, the signal kindness and favour of God to their city. Nor did Geneva rest until the temporary grant of his services, made by Strasburg, was changed into a permanent surrender. Strasburg conceded their request, but insisted on his retaining the privileges of a citizen, and the annual stipend of what they denominate the prebend. Calvin gladly accepted the former mark of respect, but could never be induced to receive the latter, since the care of riches occupied his mind the least of any thing. Calvin on being restored to the church at their earnest request, failed not, on his instauration, in consequence of observing the city to require such restraints, to testify how impossible it was for him duly to discharge his ministerial functions, unless together with Christian doctrine, the presbyterian plan of church government was established by the state, as well as a regular ecclesiastical discipline.

On this occasion, therefore, as we shall detail more at length in another part of our narrative, laws were passed consistent with the word of God, and acceptable to the citizens, for the choice of elders, and for establishing the whole plan of presbyterian discipline which Satan afterwards endeavoured without effect, by wonderful contrivances, to disannul. Calvin also wrote a catechism in French and Latin, differing very little from his first, but much more copious, and divided into questions and answers. We may justly term this an admirable work which has received the approbation of very many foreign nations, and been translated in a very elegant style into the

modern languages of Germany, England, Scotland, Holland, and Spain, into Hebrew by Immanuel Tremellius, a converted Jew, and into Greek by Henry Stephens.

The following statement of facts will enable us to form a judgment of his ordinary labours. In every fortnight he preached one whole week; thrice every week he delivered lectures; on the Thursdays he presided in the meetings of the presbytery; on the Fridays he collated and expounded the Holy Scriptures to what we term the congregation. He was engaged in illustrating many of the sacred books by commentaries of very uncommon learning; on some occasions he was employed in answering the adversaries of religion, and at other times wrote to correspondents from every part of Europe concerning subjects of great importance. Every attentive reader of his numerous productions will be astonished to find one weak little man able to accomplish so many and such great labours.

He experienced much advantage from the assistance of Farel and Viret, who in return received greater from him. And the close intercourse and friendship of these two men, which excited as much envy in the wicked as it gave pleasure to all pious minds, afforded him wonderful delight. It was a most pleasant sight to behold and hear these three distinguished persons in the church co-operating with so much zeal in the work of the Lord, and flourishing in such a variety of gifts. Farel excelled in boldness and grandure of mind. The thunders of his preaching none could hear without trembling, nor feel his most ardent prayers without the soul being elevated almost to heaven itself. Viret so excelled in a sweet persuasive eloquence, that his hearers were compelled to hang upon his lips. Calvin filled the minds of his hearers with as many most weighty sentiments as he uttered words. Hence I have often thought that a preacher would in some measure appear perfect, who was formed by the united excellencies of all three.

To return to Calvin,—he was exercised not only with these

public, but with domestic and many other foreign cares. For the Lord so blessed his ministry that he had visitors from every quarter to solicit his counsel in matters of religion, as an oracle of the Christian world; and so numerous were his hearers, that we have seen an Italian, English, and even Spanish church at Geneva, which seemed not sufficiently large to contain so many strangers.

Although his friendship was much cultivated in Geneva by the good, while he was regarded with terror by the wicked, and affairs were in the best state of arrangement, yet many opponents were still raised up to keep him actively employed. We will unfold his contests separately, that posterity may be presented with a singular example of fortitude, which is calculated to excite their most strenuous imitation.

To resume his history,—on his return to the city, keeping in mind that sentence of our Saviour, “ Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things will be added unto you.” (Matt. vi. 33,) he considered nothing so important as to prescribe laws of ecclesiastical polity consistant with the word of God, and sanctioned by the consent of the senate, from which neither citizens nor ministers would be allowed afterwards to depart. And this, which had been so much approved before, gradually excited the dislike of some of the common people, and of the chief citizens, who had indeed put off the pope, and put on Christ, but only in name. Some also of those ministers, who had remained on the expulsion of their pious brethren, (the most influential however, after being accused of profligate conduct, deserted their station in disgrace,) although convicted by the testimony of their conscience, they wanted courage to make an open resistance, still continued to pursue a system of secret opposition, and did not easily permit themselves to be forced to adopt the established discipline. Nor did they want a pretext for this their wicked conduct, namely, the example of other churches, which had not adopted excommunication. Some also cried out, that the tyranny of popery was thus re-

called. But these difficulties were overcome by the constancy and remarkable moderation of Calvin, who proved that we ought to seek for the reason of ecclesiastical discipline, as well as of doctrine, from the Scriptures, and adduced in his support the opinions of the most learned men of that age, Ecolampadius, Zwinglius, Zuichius, Melancthon, Bucer, Capito, and Myconius, to whose writings he appealed. Nor did he assert that those churches ought to be therefore condemned as unchristian, which had not proceeded to the same extent, nor those shepherds to be opposed to their Lord, who considered the same curb and restraint not to be wanted by their own flocks.

Finally, he proved the difference between popish tyranny and the yoke of the Saviour, and thus easily succeeded in inducing the people to receive, with unanimous consent, the same laws of ecclesiastical polity yet used by the church of Geneva, and which were written, read, and approved by the suffrages of the people on the 20th of November.

Although Calvin had thus made a successful commencement, yet he knew that such plans could not in reality be carried into effect without difficulty; and, on this account, was very desirous to have Viret, whom the people of Berne had allowed only for a certain period, and Farel, who had been received on his expulsion from Geneva at Neuchatel, to be appointed his perpetual colleagues. In this attempt he was unsuccessful, for Viret returned soon after to Lausanne, and Farel remained at Neuchatel, so that he enjoyed almost the whole praise of restoring the church by his own unassisted efforts.

Many things occupied Calvin the ensuing year; for to omit various domestic affairs which pressed upon his attention, the inflamed fury of the foreign enemies of the gospel banished numbers from France and Italy to Geneva, a neighbouring and now distinguished city. Calvin's zeal in comforting and refreshing those refugees by every kind of dutiful solicitude is very surprising. I omit mentioning the consolation; which he afforded to those who were placed in the yawning jaws of

the lion, by the various letters which he wrote them under their trials.

Another very great and two-fold evil occurred this year ; namely, dearness of provisions, and famine, its general attendant. It was even then a custom at Geneva to have a separate hospital out of the city for such as suffered from the plague. Since the attendance of a constant and active pastor was required, most of them dreaded the danger of contagion, and three only offered themselves—Calvin, Sebastian Castellio, (of whom we shall mention more circumstances in the following part of this narrative,) and Peter Blanchet. The lot, for this was the method of their appointment, fell on Castellio, who changed his mind, and impudently refused to undertake the burthen. The senate would not allow the lots to be taken a second time, contrary to Calvin's inclination, and Blanchet himself, therefore, undertook the whole charge. Other weighty affairs also occurred at that time : for the controversy concerning the Lord's Supper engaged the attention of Peter Tossanus, pastor of Montbelliard ; and some at Basle, Myconius opposing without effect, were desirous to overturn the foundations of church discipline, which had scarcely yet been firmly laid, and held two conferences with Calvin. Farel had been invited to preach at Metz, with great success, but very much hinderance was given to the work of the Lord, partly by the apostate P. Caroli already mentioned. The various labours in which Calvin was thus involved by writing, admonishing, and exhorting, and by other methods of affording assistance, are clearly proved by the great number of his published letters, and the testimony of many survivors.

But the Sorbonne, increasing in boldness, supported by P. Liser, first president of the parliament of Paris, whose memory is universally detested, had the courage to attempt a measure, which, to the astonishment of every one, was endured by the bishops, and even by the pope. These last,

being constantly employed, like robbers, in dividing the wealth of the church among themselves, voluntarily resigned their own proper duties of distributing the word of life to such of their brethren as they denominated good doctors, provided these last suffered themselves to be treated like dogs, which gnaw the bones that their masters, after repeated nibbling, have left. The Sorbonne had the audacity, unsupported either by human or divine authority, to prescribe such articles of Christian faith, as both by their falsehood, and their very trifling character, so commonly to be met with among this body of divines, deservedly lessened their authority in the opinion of all those, who were not wholly devoid of judgment. Some had subscribed these articles through fear, and others from ignorance, on which account Calvin answered them in such a manner as to refute, with great learning and by solid reasoning, the errors they contained, and he exposed their folly by a beautiful vein of irony, to the amusing derision of all men of common discernment.

The following year experienced equally destructive ravages from the dearness of provisions, and from the plague which infested Savoy. Calvin was constantly employed in strengthening his own flock at Geneva, and in boldly repressing the enemies of the church abroad, particularly by publishing four books on free will, dedicated to Melancthon, in answer to Albert Pighius, a Dutchman, and the most skilled sophist of the age, who had selected Calvin as an adversary, expecting that he would obtain a cardinal's hat as the reward of the distinguished victory he hoped to gain. He was, however, disappointed in his expectations, and reaped, what the enemies of the truth justly deserve, the contempt of all learned and sensible men, while he was deceived by Satan himself. Melancthon testified by his letters the esteem in which he held these works of Calvin, and we considered it right to publish their correspondence, that posterity may have a certain and clear testimony against the calumniators of such distinguished men.

A letter written this same year to the church of Montbelliard affords a sufficient answer to such as complain of his too great severity in the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline.

Calvin in the following year, 1544, stated his opinion concerning the plan which the church of Neuchatel should adopt in their ecclesiastical censures. Sebastian Castellio, in Geneva, whose fickleness we have already noticed, concealing under an apparent modesty a foolish kind of ambition, and evidently belonging to that class of men, which the Greeks call self-opiniative, became irritated with Calvin because he disapproved of his conceits in a French version of the New Testament; who carried his indignation to such a height, that not satisfied with maintaining some erroneous opinions, he even ordered, in a public manner, the Song of Solomon to be erased from the canon, as an impure and obscene song, and reviled with very violent reproaches the ministers of Geneva by whom he was opposed. They justly thought that it was not their duty patiently to endure such conduct, and summoned him before the senate, where, after a very patient hearing, on the last day of May, and a calm examination of the charges brought against him, he was condemned for calumny, and ordered to leave the city. He afterwards settled in Basle, and his conduct there will be considered in another part of our narrative.

Charles 5th, in the year 1543, advancing with all his strength against Francis 1st, had taken care to secure for the two great religious parties in Germany the enjoyment of equal rights, until the meeting of a council which he promised to convene. Pope Paul III., feeling very indignant at such a proceeding, published a very grave admonition to Charles for his having thus placed the heretics on a level with the Catholics, and for putting his scythe into a crop which belonged to another. Charles returned what he considered a fair answer. Calvin repressed the audacity of the pontiff for the severity with which he had attacked in these letters the truth of the gospel, and the moral conduct of the reformers.

Calvin embraced the opportunity offered him by the diet assembled at Spiers, for publishing a book on the necessity of reforming the church, which, in my opinion, is one of the most nervous, powerful treatises published in our age on that subject. Calvin, the same year, so refuted, in two books, both the anabaptists and libertines, who had revived the most monstrous heresies of antiquity, that I think no attentive reader, unless designedly and knowingly, could have been deceived, or, if he had formerly been in an error, would not voluntarily have returned to the right way. The book published against the libertines very much displeased the Queen of Navarre, because, which is almost incredible, she had been so infatuated by the two principal leaders of this horrible sect, Quintin and Pocquet, whom Calvin had expressly attacked, as to consider them, though she did not adopt their mysterious views, good men, on which account she thought herself in some measure deeply wounded through their sides. Calvin, on learning this, answered her with uncommon moderation, mindful of her dignity, and of the several kindnesses which this queen had conferred upon the church of Christ; he blamed her too great imprudence in an ingenuous and discreet manner with great address, becoming a courageous servant of God, for harkening to such men, while he asserted at the same time the authority of his own ministry. His writings produced the effect of confining the followers of this horrid sect of the libertines, which had begun to spread in France, within the boundaries of Holland, and of the adjacent countries.

After he had terminated so many labours in 1544, he was again involved, in the following year, in new disputes of a still more serious kind. For as if a pestilence inflicted by God himself was not sufficient to waste the city and the whole neighbourhood, some of the very lowest classes, whose assistance was required by the rich in cleansing their houses and healing the sick, were induced by avarice to form a shocking conspiracy, for the purpose of infecting the posts and thresholds

of their doors, and of every thing in their road, with an ointment that conveyed the disease and communicated this dreadful scourge. They also, by a terrible oath, mutually taken in the most solemn manner, bound themselves as slaves to Satan should they ever be found to betray their accomplices, though the rack itself were used to extort confession. A considerable number of them were detected both in the city and adjoining country, and received a punishment merited by their enormous crimes. The reproach is incredible which Satan, by this artifice, raised against Calvin and the city of Geneva, as if the prince of darkness plainly reigned in that city where he was most violently opposed.

This year was disgraced by a massacre of unparalleled cruelty, occasioned by an edict which the parliament of Aix issued against the Waldenses of Merindol and Cabrier, and the whole of that tract of country; it was not confined to one or two sufferers, but extended to the whole people without distinction of age or sex, and the villages were consumed in one common conflagration. These evils pressed more heavily on Calvin, who afforded solace and succour to the few refugees that fled to Geneva, because he had on a former occasion used means, by sending letters and supplying pastors, to have them purely instructed in the gospel, and by his intercession with the German princes and the Swiss states, had preserved them from impending danger.

The unhappy controversy respecting the Supper of our Lord was at this time again renewed. Osiander, a proud man and of a strange disposition, stirred up the flame of discord, which seemed to be extinguished, and Calvin used every exertion in his power to terminate it, as appears by his letters written to Melancthon, and published under my inspection. But Osiander's want of moderation prevented him from listening to the sound advice of these two great men, by whom he is denominated Pericles.

In the mean time many excellent characters fell victims to the plague which raged in the city. But Calvin thundered

with all his power from the pulpit against the vices of some, and particularly against fornication, which the scourge of the plague could not terminate. The good supported him, but the efforts of the pious were weakened by a few demagogues, until, as will be stated in its proper place, they voluntarily plunged themselves in irretrievable ruin. These evils were increased by the unseasonable disputes concerning the right of the city; nor could faithful pastors in other parts of Europe endure to see church property, taken from the Roman hierarchy, improperly managed in many places. Clamours and complaints were at that time very frequent on this subject, and much labour devoted to it both in writing and speaking, but generally without effect. Calvin, indeed, openly professed that he was by no means a friend to so many sacrilegious proceedings, which he knew must finally meet with a most severe divine scourge, but acknowledged the just judgment of the Lord God because he would not allow revenues, acquired formerly by priests in so base a manner, to be brought into the treasuries of the church.

Calvin felt deep concern this year, both from a domestic and a foreign cause. A Genevese of the name of Troillet, young, indeed, but artful, after having counterfeited for some time the hermit in France, had returned to Geneva. Calvin, distinguished above most men for his sagacious penetration into character, developed this person, who concealed himself in the commencement under the appearance of piety. Calvin first admonished him mildly, but afterwards rebuked him more freely, when his conduct in the congregation was distinguished by insolence and ambition. He did not bear such reproof properly, and endeavoured to secure the aid and zealous favour of such as were generally condemned by Calvin on account of their vices. On the death of one of the pastors, Troillet openly endeavoured, with the assistance of his friends, to canvass for the office of a minister of the gospel, when the appointment of a successor was under consideration. In short, the senate interposed its authority, and

ordered him to be preferred. Calvin and his colleagues opposed the measure, proving how much such a system of canvassing was contrary to the word of God, and obtained, with the approbation of the senate, the enforcement of the written laws of the church.

There were also at that time in France certain persons, who, having renounced the protestant religion at the commencement, through fear of persecution, had begun afterwards so far to flatter themselves as to deny there was any sin in being present with their bodies only at the celebration of the mass, provided they embraced the true religion in their hearts. Calvin, whom they blamed for the excess of his severity, plainly refuted, by his clear and elegant writings, this very pernicious error, which the fathers had long ago condemned. He annexed also the opinions of the most learned reformers, Philip Melancthon, Peter Martyr, Bucer, and the church of Zurich, and so far restrained the progress of this error, that the Nicodemites, which name they had acquired by adducing the example of this most holy person as a pretext for their false sentiments, fell into bad repute in the church.

The year 1546 was not less stormy than the past. For it was necessary to fortify the minds of the people against the frequent accounts circulated concerning the designs of Charles 5th in opposition to religion, and against the fraudulent schemes of the pope, who was reported to employ a number of emissaries as incendiaries. The state of the city itself also particularly excited his commiseration, for the petulance of the wicked, so far from suffering itself to be subdued by so many scourges, became still more insolent, and at last broke through all restraints. For Ami Perrin, a very audacious and ambitious character, denominated on this account by Calvin, in his letters, the mock Cæsar, had succeeded, by the suffrages of the people, in obtaining the nomination of captain-general, and some time before had become leader of the opposers of order. This man imagining, as was the fact, that neither he nor his accomplices could succeed, while

the laws were maintained with vigour, and Calvin in particular continued to thunder against their wanton and disorderly conduct, began openly to discover this year what he and his associates had long projected. He continued silent for a while, when he had been punished and crushed by the authority of the senate, merely with a view to disclose afterwards his wickedness in a more open manner. For, a short period having elapsed, one of the senators, secretly instigated, as is supposed, by two ministers addicted to wine, who had good reason, as well as others, to dread the severity of the laws, accused Calvin of false doctrine before a considerably large assembly. Calvin continued unmoved by such attacks. This senator was tried, condemned, branded with infamy by his own body, the two false pastors were conjointly suspended from their office, and the taverns deprived of their licence. Such was the result of the machinations of the wicked, who were completely disappointed.

The general conflagration which had been smothered this year, burst forth in 1547, which was the most calamitous period during that age. The churches in Germany were reduced to the greatest extremity, her princes and cities either surrendered to the emperor, or were taken by force, and a work, which had been raised by the unwearied labours of so many years, seemed to be overthrown in one moment. Many considered those happy, who had been rescued by a timely death from such dreadful tumults. Who, then, can picture the anguish that wrung the pious breast of Calvin in those public calamities by which so many churches were overwhelmed? When the churches enjoyed the most profound peace, our reformer felt as ardent an affection for the most distant, as if the weight of them all rested on his own shoulders. What pungency of grief must he at that time have felt, when he beheld those illustrious characters, Melancthon, Bucer, Martyr, his dearest friends, exposed to such imminent danger, as to be placed on the very brink of death! His writings, however, testify, and the fact itself proved, that

Calvin overcame these storms with the greatest fortitude. Though persecuted in a very severe manner by the wicked at Geneva, he did not move a step from the high station of constancy and integrity which he had taken.

To return to Calvin's domestic disputes,—when his whole time was employed in proving that the gospel he preached was not a mere speculative doctrine, but consisted in a pious Christian life, he necessarily incurred the enmity of those, who had proclaimed war not only against all piety and virtue, but even against their very country. Perrin, as already stated, still continued their leader, for his own condition and the state of his associates were so bad, that it was evident they must make the most desperate efforts ; and the abandoned openly declared it was necessary for the cognizance of all questions under discussion, that they should be removed from the presbytery to the senate. The presbytery, on the other hand, insisted that the laws established concerning church discipline were agreeable to the word of God, and they implored the aid of the senate to prevent the church from receiving any injury. The senate determined it necessary to ratify the laws of the church, and confirmed them accordingly. After Perrin had exposed himself to very great danger by his own audacious conduct, the whole affair was settled by expelling him from the senate, depriving him of his captaincy, and reducing him to a mere private station. Though all these transactions were carried on before the magistrates, yet it is impossible to state how much trouble they occasioned Calvin. On one occasion there was great danger of blood being shed in the court itself, where the council of two hundred was assembled, by the swords of the contending parties. Calvin coming up with his colleagues, at the risk of his own life, since the faction of the wicked was chiefly aimed against him, quelled the riot. He still persisted to hold up to detestation, in the most solemn manner, their criminal conduct, and to rebuke them in the strongest terms according to their deserts. Nor was his denunciation of God's judgment vain, since a certain person

was then apprehended for writing a libel, and fixing it to the pulpit, in which he produced many base charges against the ministers, and declared, in a written document, that Calvin himself ought to be cast into the Rhone. He was summoned to trial, convicted in an unexpected manner of a great variety of other blasphemous proceedings, and beheaded. After his death a paper was found professedly written with his own hand against Moses, and consequently Christ, and his impious conduct left no doubt of his having also infected some others.

Calvin wrote, this year, in the midst of all these contentions, his "*Antidote against the seven Sessions of the Council of Trent.*" He also sent an epistle to the church of Rouen, fortifying them against the artifices of a certain Franciscan preacher, who was disseminating the poison of the errors of Carpocrates, that were renewed by the libertines.

The following year, 1548, the disorders of the factious again broke forth in Geneva by the device of Satan, who made Farel and Viret instrumental to this result; a fact scarcely credible, because they were most desirous to cure all the evils. These ministers came to Geneva in the beginning of the year, and addressed the senate in a very solemn manner on the necessity of healing their contentions, since Calvin only demanded reformation of manners. Perrin, with his associates, that he might recover his former situation, pretended to agree to whatever was proposed. Every thing now appeared to be amicably arranged, but the result afterwards showed that he had only imposed upon the pious. On Perrin's restoration, the wickedness of the abandoned citizens went to such a height, that they openly used certain breastplates, cut in the form of a cross, as a mark for distinguishing each other; some called their dogs Calvin, others transformed Calvin into Cain; a considerable number declared they refrained, in consequence of their hatred of Calvin, from the Lord's Supper. Our reformer and his colleagues rebuked all this conduct with much boldness, summoned them to the senate, and the innocence of the pious was easily victorious.

An amnesty was finally again ratified on the 18th of December by a solemn oath. The event proved that Perrin had been dissembling in the whole of his late conduct, and the only object he had in view was to rise to the syndicate, for the purpose of more completely opening to himself and his associates a still more certain access to these offices, which might enable them to involve all in one common ruin.

Calvin was not diverted from his labours by these disputes, but he illustrated six epistles of St. Paul, by very learned commentaries, as if he had enjoyed the utmost leisure. He refuted what was termed the “*Interim*,” that was published with a view to ruin the German churches, by a work written with great force, which pointed out the true method for restoring the church. He exposed, in a very elegant paper, the falsehood and vanity of judicial astrology, of which many at that time entertained a high opinion. Having received an obliging letter from Brentius, banished to Basle, he consoled him with much tenderness and friendship, and I wish Brentius had not broken the bonds of this union. He then also candidly exhorted Bucer, when banished to England, to speak and write his opinion more openly concerning the Lord’s Supper, and comforted him in a very friendly manner. At the same time he took great pains to give advice, by letter, to the Duke of Somerset, protector of England, who afterwards very unjustly suffered an ignominious death; and had Calvin’s plans been followed, the church of England would in all probability have escaped many storms. (i)

The church of Geneva wonderfully increased in the midst of these disputes, and this grieved Satan and bad men to a very great degree. Calvin’s zeal on the other hand was very much increased, by entertaining, in the kindest manner, those who were banished from their country on account of religion. The faction of the seditious, though not entirely extinguished, was much subdued the following year, and afforded him more leisure for attending to the distresses of the suffering protestants. He required, indeed, a cessation

from such disputes, for he now sustained a very severe domestic affliction in the loss of his wife, who was distinguished by a most excellent and choice character. He endured his trial on this occasion with such constancy as to leave a singular example of fortitude to the whole church in a similar dispensation of Providence. (*k*)

The churches of Saxony not being agreed respecting the nature and use of indifferent things, Calvin was this year consulted and gave his opinion frankly on this subject; he also admonished Melancthon of his duty, who was unjustly accused by some of too much gentleness in his views on this question, as Calvin afterwards more fully discovered.

It was not then known what spirit actuated the evil genius of Flaccius, and the whole tribe of his followers, by which they afterwards caused such disturbances, and to this day so subvert the work of the Lord, that they could not have done it more audaciously and furiously had they been hired to it by the gold of the Roman pontiff. But the Lord, while this wound was inflicted upon the German churches, granted a contrary blessing to the Swiss; for Farel and Calvin made a visit to Zurich, that, as certain persons considered the latter in some measure to favour consubstantiation, all protestants might be entirely satisfied concerning the unanimous agreement of all the Helvetic churches in this important article. It was not difficult to unite good men devoted to the truth. An harmony was drawn up with the unanimous approbation of all the Swiss and Grison churches, which had the effect of still more closely uniting Bullinger with Calvin, and the church of Zurich with that of Geneva, to which we still adhere, and hope by the blessing of God to do so to the end. The conclusion of this year was productive of happiness to the church, when it is contrasted with the preceding; and I state this with greater pleasure, because I was now first introduced into the sacred office on the call of the church of Lausanne, and at Calvin's instigation.

About this time Calvin wrote two letters, abounding with

profound erudition to Lelius Socinus, of Sienna, who died at Zurich after a long-continued residence.

These letters evidently prove the scepticism of Socinus, which was not fully known until many years had elapsed, and death itself had closed his labours. He visited the various churches, and deceived even the most learned, and among the rest particularly Melancthon, Calvin, and Camerarius, who bears in his life of Melancthon a very honourable testimony to his character, which he does not deserve. It is ascertained beyond doubt, that he was afterwards in a great measure the author of the confused Bellian controversy, and a favourer of the wild opinions of Servetus, Castellio, and Ochinus, an account of which we shall give in its proper place. His commentary also upon the celebrated first chapter of John is yet extant, in which he has much surpassed the impiety of all the heretics, who ever corrupted that very divine passage.

The year 1550 was remarkable for its tranquillity with respect to the church. The consistory resolved that the ministers should not confine their instructions to public preaching, which was neglected by some, and heard with very little advantage by others, but at stated seasons should visit every family from house to house, attended by an elder, and a decurion of each ward, to explain the Christian doctrines to the common people, and require from every one a brief account of their faith. These private visits were of great use to the church, and it is scarcely credible how much fruit was produced by this plan of instruction.

The consistory gave directions that the celebration of the birth of Christ should be deferred to the following day, and that no festival should be observed as holy, excepting the seventh, which is called the Lord's day. This proceeding gave offence to many, and for the purpose of reproaching Calvin, there were some who circulated an unfounded report of his abrogating the Sabbath itself: though this subject was discussed before the people, and the decree passed with-

out the request or even the knowledge of the ministers, yet Calvin did not think it worth his while to excite any dispute. In consequence of many being offended with such changes, Calvin embraced this opportunity for writing a "Treatise on Scandal," dedicated to his old and very faithful friend, Laurence of Normandy.

The disputes in 1551 fully compensated for the tranquillity of the two preceding years. The death of Bucer, much beloved by Calvin, and of James Vadian, consul of St. Gal, a person of singular piety and erudition, deeply afflicted the whole church, and especially our reformer. The wickedness of the factious burst forth with greater violence, in proportion to the length of time it had been smothered: they openly asserted that the right of citizenship ought not to be granted to strangers, who took refuge in Geneva; and not content with this, they mocked and jostled Calvin on his return from preaching beyond the Rhone.

Raymond, his colleague, passing over the bridge across the Rhone by night, nearly fell headlong into it, in consequence of the factious secretly removing one of the piles. They excited a considerable tumult at the church of St. Gervais, assigning as a pretext, that the minister had refused to give the name Balthazar, which had been expressly prohibited by laws made on sufficient grounds, to a child whom they had brought for baptism. Calvin, not being able to remedy these evils, bore them with Christian resignation, fortitude, and invincible patience. But another new evil attacked the church of Geneva at this time. Jerome Bolsec, late a Carmelite monk at Paris, was the occasion of this confusion; who, having laid aside the habit a few years before, retained the spirit and character of a monk. He fled from Paris, and was banished from the court of the Duchess de Ferrara, who had been deceived by him, and having been made physician in the space of three days, paid a visit to Geneva. Being held in no repute among learned physicians, he aimed to establish his credit as a divine, by beginning to prate some-

thing privately concerning the falsehood and absurdity of predestination, and afterwards in the church. Calvin at first was content with refuting him, and used mild remonstrance, but afterwards, by private conversation, our reformer endeavoured to correct his errors. But Bolsec, whether excited by monastic ambition, or goaded on by the seditious, who had been seeking for some one to attack Calvin, on the 16th of October, when the preacher was explaining in the church the following passage : " He that is of God heareth God's words ; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God," (John viii. 47,) openly dared to support free will, and the foreknowledge of works, for the purpose of subverting the decree of eternal predestination, which is superior in order to all causes. He attacked the true doctrine with contumelious language, and a purely seditious arrogance ; and he is thought to have done this with greater boldness, because he considered Calvin to be absent, as Bolsec did not happen to behold him in his usual place. He was indeed absent at the commencement of the sermon, but as he came in after the preacher had proceeded with his subject, he had remained behind some of the rest of the congregation. When the discourse of the monk was finished, Calvin suddenly appeared, and though he evidently spoke without premeditation, displayed on this occasion, as much as on any other, his great talents in controversy. Calvin indeed confuted his opponent with so much force, adduced so many passages from Scripture, so many quotations in particular from St. Augustin, and, finally, so many, and such weighty arguments, that all, except the monk himself, with his shameless front, blushed exceedingly for the daring assailant. He was seized by a magistrate in the congregation, who was empowered for that purpose, dismissed the assembly, and committed to prison as a seditious offender. In short, the cause was discussed in various disputations ; the senate requested the judgment of the Swiss churches, expelled him from the city, after being publicly condemned for sedition and downright Pelagian-

ism, and threatened to inflict corporal punishment, if they should again apprehend him either in the city or its territory. Bolsec retired into a neighbouring city, where he caused many and great disturbances ; and having been twice driven from the Canton of Berne, he went first to Paris, and then to Orleans, canvassing for the charge of the ministry among the French churches, which he expected would continue tranquil, affecting, by strange arts, repentance for his conduct, and expressing, of his own accord, a desire to be reconciled with the church of Geneva. When he appeared as if really prepared thus to act, the persecution of the protestant churches, contrary to his expectations, alarmed him, and, resuming the study of medicine, he openly forsook the protestants, and returned to the popish profession, having abandoned also his wife to the canons of Autun, and became a gross railer against the truth, which practice he still continues in that city. But the College of Ministers at Geneva, in a public meeting, asserted the true doctrine of predestination, and approved the statement afterwards given of it by Calvin in a treatise published on that subject. Satan, by these disputes, was the occasion of so much light being thrown upon this article of our faith, involved before in very great obscurity, that it has been made clear and evident to all but the friends of contention.

In the following year it appeared more certain what such a flame the impure Bolsec had raised, although condemned by the common judgment of so many churches. For the difficulty of a question, which had not yet been sufficiently explained by the greater part of the ancients, and the discussion of which had not always ended in the same conclusion, excited in a peculiar manner inquisitive minds to investigate this important point. The factious also considered this to be an excellent opportunity for effecting the complete subversion of all order, if Calvin could only be expelled. It is impossible to state the various disputes which followed, not only in the city, but in every quarter, as if the trumpet was sounded by

Satan himself. For though the ministers of the principal churches beautifully harmonized, there were, however, some of the neighbouring churches of Berne, which threatened to enter into controversy with Calvin, as if he made God the author of sin, evidently forgetting that Calvin had long ago professedly refuted this very destructive opinion, in his treatise against the libertines. At Basle also the good and simple man, Castellio, the greatest part of whose conduct was marked by secrecy, supported Pelagianism with considerable openness. Even Melanchthon himself had commenced writing on these subjects in such a manner, that notwithstanding he had expressly before this period subscribed to Calvin's book against Pighius, yet some thought he pointed to the ministers of Geneva, as if they were introducing a stoical fate. I wholly omit mentioning the catholics, who now again repeated the same calumnies, which had been a thousand times refuted. These circumstances necessarily distressed Calvin's mind with much greater keenness, because, occasionally during that period, the power of error had been so great, that in some parts public authority seemed to interpose for preventing the ministers to declare the truth.

Nor was this a controversy finished in a few years: but, first of all, the good hermit, Troillet, already mentioned, came forth this very year to enter the field of controversy with Calvin, who some time before, after being rejected as an unsuccessful candidate for the ministry, had become a lawyer, and the patron of the factious. This cause was discussed on both sides before the senate with considerable warmth. Calvin defended his doctrine by the sole authority of truth, while his opponent conducted the discussion, supported by the impudence and the favour of the abandoned. The truth was victorious; and the writings of Calvin, which is a striking fact, were even recognized as orthodox and pious by the suffrages of his opponents.

We must not conceal the repentance of this Troillet some few years after, who, on his death-bed, sent for Calvin, with

great earnestness, as a witness, to inform him that he could not die with peace of conscience, unless he was reconciled to him before he departed. He confessed in what an unworthy manner he had carried on his attack against Calvin, who not only paid him every attention, but with the greatest kindness raised and comforted his drooping spirit, and confirmed his faith until his dying hour.

But the year 1553, the wickedness of the seditious hastening to a close, was so very turbulent, that both church and state were brought into extreme danger. They made so great a progress by threats and clamour, the virtuous part of the society enjoying no liberty in consequence of the great number of the seditious, as to disannul the ancient edicts for electing and appointing senators, which, by the kind favour of God, afforded an argument for the virtuous, to adopt afterwards such an improvement in their councils, as secured more completely their own rights. They expelled some from the senate, deprived all foreign refugees of their arms, under the pretence of fear, and allowed them only the use of swords when they went into the country. Every thing seemed to be in a state of preparation for accomplishing the plans of the seditious, since all was subject to their power.

Satan then presented another occasion for exciting disturbance. For that real enemy of the Sacred Trinity, or rather of all true deity, and therefore a monster formed from all kinds of the most absurd and impious heresies which had formally taken possession of the human mind, Michael Servetus, after wandering as a physician for some years in various parts of Europe, under the feigned name of Villanovanus, disseminated his blasphemies at Vienne, in a thick volume. Arnollet, of Lyons, was printer, and William Gueret, corrector, as it is termed, of the press, who was long ago devoted to the seditious at Geneva, and a few months before left that city for Lyons, to avoid the punishment to which he was exposed, on account of fornication and other crimes. Servetus, after publishing this work, abounding with blas-

phemies, on account of which he had been imprisoned at Vienne, whence, by contrivances, with which I am wholly unacquainted, he afterwards escaped, now came, under unfavourable auspices, to Geneva, with an intention of going to some more distant place, if the providence of God had not so arranged that he was cast into prison by one of the magistrates ; who was informed of his being in that city by Calvin, who recognized him soon after his arrival, having been well acquainted with Servetus long before. A book was published, where a very full account may be met with of the controversies then discussed, and of the importance of the subjects examined. The result of the whole was, that this ruined character, in whose ear it was thought one of the seditious, being assessor with the *prætor*, whispered advice calculated to harden the mind of the prisoner in his sins, was betrayed by his own vain confidence, and condemned for impiety and an infinite number of blasphemies, according to the sentence even of all the Swiss churches. This unhappy person was burned alive, without manifesting the least mark of repentance, on the 27th of October.

Farel was so broken down with disease this year, that he was left by Calvin, who had come to visit him at Neuchatel, apparently in dying circumstances. He was, however, afterwards restored, contrary to all expectations, and continued to comfort and refresh the church. This year was hitherto evidently spent by us in an alternation of hope and fear, but the grief we experienced was followed by the feelings of joy.

For while the proceedings were going on in the case of Servetus, Bertelier, one of the factious, a man of the most abandoned impudence, who had been forbidden the Lord's table by the presbytery on account of his many crimes, entered the senate, and petitioned them to authorize the abrogation of his sentence. Had this request been granted, all the bonds of church discipline would undoubtedly have been broken, and all church order immediately dissolved. Calvin, therefore, with great earnestness and boldness, in the name

of the presbytery, opposed it, and proved that the magistrate ought to be the avenger, not destroyer of the sacred laws, and he neglected nothing which so momentous a dispute required. The false clamours of those, who asserted that the presbytery, in some cases, usurped the power of the magistrates, triumphed; and a resolution was passed, on the question being brought before the grand council of two hundred, that the final decision, on all cases of excommunication, should be vested in the senate, with a power to absolve such as they thought fit. Agreeable to this decision, Bertelier secretly obtained letters abrogating his sentence, and confirmed by the seal of the state, from the senate, which did not at that time direct its attention to the careful investigation of this subject. Perrin, and his faction, expected that Calvin would either disobey the orders of the senate, and thus sink under popular tumult, or, if he obeyed them, all the authority of the presbytery, and with it the powerful restraints upon the wicked, would, without difficulty, be afterwards broken for ever. But Calvin, having received notice of this resolution only two days before the administration of the supper, as usual, in September, uttered, during the sermon, with uplifted hands, and in a solemn tone, many severe denunciations against the profaners of mysteries, whose sacred character he described; and, "for my own part," said he, (after the example of Chrysostom,) "I will rather suffer myself to be slain, than allow this hand to stretch forth the sacred things of the Lord to those who are lawfully condemned as despisers of God." This voice, wonderful to state, produced such an effect, even upon his unbridled enemies, that Perrin immediately gave secret orders to Bertelier, not to present himself at the table, and the sacred mysteries were celebrated with a surprisingly profound silence, and under a solemn awe, as if the Deity himself had been visible among them. But, after dinner, in the course of his explaining that remarkable passage in the Acts of the Apostles, where Paul bids farewell to the church of

Ephesus, Calvin protested that he was not the man who either himself knew any thing about resisting magistrates, or taught others to do so, and exhorted, at considerable length, the people to persevere in the doctrine which they had heard. And in conclusion, as if it was the last sermon he would preach at Geneva, he said, " Since affairs are in such a state, permit me also, brethren, to apply to you the language of the apostle, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace." These words struck his abandoned enemies dumb, in a surprising manner, and the good were more seriously confirmed and admonished of their duty. Calvin, the next day, accompanied by his colleagues and the presbytery, deliberately demanded of the senate, and the council of two hundred, that their case should be determined by the people themselves, since the law, whose abrogation was then under consideration, had been made by the people.

The opinions of these two ruling bodies were changed after such observations, and it was resolved that the decree of the two hundred should be suspended, the four reformed states of Switzerland consulted, and no alteration in the mean time should take place in the existing laws. Thus the storm being broken rather than quelled, the leaders of the faction endeavoured, from the occurrence of particular circumstances, to make it fall upon the head of Farel, which, contrary to all expectation, had been averted from that of Calvin. For Farel, who had suffered so severely from a violent disease in the month of March, visited Geneva as soon as the restoration of his health allowed. In his sermon, relying on the justice of the cause, on his age, and former influence, he reproved, with great keenness, the supporters of faction. They complained loudly that Farel had done them a serious injury, and on his return to Neuchatel they procured letters from the senate to the government of that state, for the purpose of allowing Farel to be summoned to Geneva, and to answer for himself on the day appointed. Farel came, and was exposed to considerable danger from the factious, who cried

out, that he ought to be thrown into the Rhone for his conduct. A prudent, discreet, courageous young man, in the first place, frequently warned Perrin to use every exertion that the common father, as it were, of the city, might not suffer any injury. He was afterwards joined by one of his companions, another young man of integrity, who advised such as were friends of good order what measures they ought to adopt. The concourse of a great part of the city took place when Farel seated himself in the court. His accusers, astonished at this circumstance, and being now anxious for their own personal safety, earnestly entreated for the acquittal of Farel, after an audience had been given him. Thus nearly the whole of the year was spent against the wicked, in contending either for good doctrine, or wholesome discipline. The result was everywhere prosperous, if we except the wound, which not only England, but all Christian churches, suffered in the death of the most pious King Edward the 6th, who was cut off in the flower of youth.

Calvin was so intent upon his studies during this year, as to publish his excellent Commentaries on John. We may here declare, and I heartily wish it were without cause concerning Servetus, what the ancient fathers of the church, taught by experience, wrote of these two monsters, Paul of Samosata, and Arius of Alexandria, that they commenced conflagrations, which afterwards set on fire nearly all the churches of the Christian world. Servetus was justly punished at Geneva, not as a sectary, but as a minister, made up of nothing but impiety and horrid blasphemies, with which, by his speeches and writings, for the space of thirty years, he had infected both heaven and earth. Even now it is impossible to state how much he has increased the rage of Satan, since the flame, raised by him, first seized upon Poland, then Transylvania and Hungary, and would to God it had not extended even farther. Servetus may justly be considered as having uttered a prediction, with a spirit evidently satanic, when he selected the following sentence, with the same

feelings of conscience that dictated all his other writings, as a frontispiece to his book, which is true, if the particle *with*, not *against*, be used: “Great war took place in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon.”

The ashes of this unhappy man were scarcely cold, when the question was discussed concerning the punishment of heretics. Some thought it right to restrain within due bounds, but not to punish heretics with death; others determined to leave them to the judgment of God, from a conviction that the word of truth is not sufficiently clear on heresy, and that, according to the practice of the Academicians, different sentiments may be entertained by both sides concerning all the articles of religion: even some good men supported this opinion, fearing lest, by adopting contrary sentiments, they should appear to inflame the cruelty of tyrants against the pious. The principal supporters of this sentiment were Castellio and Lelius Socinus, the former in a more secret manner, the latter with greater boldness. Socinus, in his preface for perverting the Holy Bible, has evidently studied to destroy the manifest authority of the divine word, and has expressly stated in his notes to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, for the purpose of withdrawing our attention from the written word as imperfect, that Paul had taught some of his perfect disciples, with whom I am wholly unacquainted, a certain more profound system of divinity than what he has delivered to us in the Scriptures.

Calvin, in the beginning of 1554, published a copious refutation of the doctrine of Servetus, which was subscribed by all his colleagues, and assigned reasons why, and to what extent, after a proper legal investigation, heretics ought to be punished by the magistrates. This refutation was answered in the name of one Martin Bellius, who was Castellio himself, though he afterwards denied it on oath, in a confused work, formed out of extracts from the corrupted writings of pious doctors, and from the manuscripts of certain un-

known fanatics. They forged the name of the city where, they falsely pretended, this confused treatise had been published, and inserted it in the preface. I afterwards returned an answer to this work, which contained not only the error already mentioned, but many blasphemies, with a view to free Calvin from the troublesome interruption he would have experienced in the prosecution of works of greater importance, especially in writing his very learned commentaries on Genesis, and also in his unwearied labours for warding off other dangers, hereafter to be stated, by which the church was threatened. For the factious persisted in their innovations; and though, on the 2d of February, an amnesty was again ratified in the presence of the senate with a solemn promise, yet they daily increased in wickedness. Calvin continued to be very much occupied, while he laboured by his usual reproofs to recall the abandoned to habits of virtue, and to confirm the good against the vile conduct of the wicked: for they had advanced to such a dreadful height of vice, as to parody the word of God itself in obscene songs, and to knock down, and sometimes even to plunder, foreigners, whom they met in the evening. They called in also the private and special assistance of Bolsec, Castellio, and certain other characters, who forsooth displayed great anxiety about the truth, for the purpose of renewing the controversy concerning predestination. They were not satisfied with disseminating that famous anonymous work, replete with calumny, in which Calvin, the faithful servant of God, was reviled in a very surprising manner; but Castellio sent another Latin work to be published secretly at Paris, which I afterwards answered, and Calvin himself refuted some foolish absurdities of the same argument comprehended in certain articles.

Calvin was at this time occupied with the care of the numerous strangers, who had been obliged to quit England, some of whom had retired to Vezel, others to Embden, and the rest to Franckfort, who all frequently solicited his advice.

He was much distressed by the audacity of certain pastors, belonging to the French church at Strasburg, formerly founded by him, who were supported by the secret favour and assistance of some of their colleagues.

The great labours in which Calvin was engaged this year, for the interests of various churches, appear from his numerous letters, by which he induced many princes to embrace the gospel, and confirmed, with very great advantage, many of his brethren, either exposed to the most imminent danger of their lives, or confined in chains.

We have already spoken of the published harmony of the doctrine of the sacraments among all the Swiss and Grison churches, which afforded great joy to the learned and good of all denominations. This harmony displeased the spirit of error, with whose power we are already well acquainted. He easily got one Joachim Westphal to stir up the covered embers, who, having sounded the tocsin, was supported by Heshusius, then minister of the word of God, and now made a bishop, of whom we shall afterwards give a more full account. Calvin published, at that time, an explanation of this harmony, which, in proportion as it excited the furious indignation of these writers, proved more highly useful to all the lovers of truth.

The following year, by the wonderful kindness of God, produced a desired rest for the church and state of Geneva from its domestic contentions. The factious ruined themselves in consequence of the timely detection of a dreadful conspiracy, by the petulance and audacity of certain drunkards concerned in it; some of them were condemned to a capital punishment, and others left their native country. And although they harassed the city for a considerable space of time afterwards, yet all shared at last a shameful death; and in this way exhibited a singular example of the late, but just judgment of God. The republic was thus freed from these pests of society; and God conferred another blessing by the answer of the four Swiss states, which was re-

turned a short time before this event, whose opinion the senate had determined to take the preceding year, as already stated, concerning the discipline of the church of Geneva. All the edicts of church government, contrary to the expectation of the factious, were ratified, and confirmed by the unanimous suffrages of the citizens.

Calvin was not left without occasion for strenuous exertions, as in foreign affairs he took great pains in promoting the establishment of the churches in Poland, according to the will of the king. The dreadful tempest excited on the change of government in England, hurried away to heaven, along with innumerable others in that country, those three bishops and martyrs of unrivalled piety—Hooper, Ridley, and Latimer, and at length the great Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. Calvin was very much employed in comforting his French brethren in bonds, and especially the five martyrs of most distinguished bravery, who were burned in the most cruel manner at Cambray.

But the ashes of Servetus began again to spring up afresh at home, whose blasphemies were favoured by Matthew Grimaldo, an eminent lawyer, who had accidentally come to Geneva, as Fargias, a village in the neighbourhood of that city, belonged to him. Calvin, on being introduced to him by certain Italians, among whom he had been a teacher at Padua, refused to give him the right hand of fellowship, unless they were agreed about the first article of Christian faith, the sacred Trinity, and the divinity of Christ. Such conduct left no room for exhortations or arguments, and he in reality experienced afterwards, what Calvin even then predicted, that the dreadful judgment of God was impending over him for his obstinate impiety. He first escaped from Tubingen, where he had been introduced by the kindness of Virgerius; and was afterwards taken at Berne, where he renounced his heresies, in order to escape the dangers by which he was threatened. He afterwards returned to his former principles, and became the supporter and guest of

Gentilis, to whose conduct we shall on another occasion revert. He at last died of the plague, by which he was suddenly seized, and thus escaped the punishment prepared for him.

Another circumstance prevented Calvin from experiencing uninterrupted joy this year. A faction arose of a few neighbouring ministers, who were of their own accord opposed to Calvin, and under the influence of Bolsec. These persons, though of infamous characters, thinking to acquire reputation by attacking so illustrious an adversary, accused him, in scurrilous language, of making God the author of sin, because he taught that nothing is exempted from the eternal providence and appointment of God. Calvin despised at first these calumnies to which we have already alluded, but compelled at last by their railings, solicited permission to repair to Berne, accompanied by envoys from the republic, to maintain the cause of truth before the inhabitants of that city. After advocating his cause, Castellio was banished with infamy from the territory of Berne, and Bolsec was also ordered to depart; nor did they think it then necessary to draw up any definite articles on the subject discussed, since the Lord himself took his own plans for supporting the interests of his church. Calvin would otherwise have appeared to have gained his object by authority or favour, which was subsequently supported by the voluntary confession of his opponent. For all these calumnies soon afterwards vanished into smoke, and Andrew Zebedee, Calvin's bitterest accuser on this occasion, retracted his errors on his death-bed, after Calvin's decease, having sent for the principal citizens of Newburgh, four miles distance from Geneva. He manifested his perfect detestation of his former conduct, by ordering all his own papers to be burned before his eyes, which was certainly a better decision than if these orders had been issued by a thousand decrees of the senate. (*l*)

In the following year, Calvin, in consequence of his imprudence, was attacked with a tertian fever when preaching,

and obliged, contrary to his inclination, to leave the pulpit. This circumstance gave rise to many false reports, which were so acceptable to the Roman Catholics, that a solemn procession was held at Noyon, his native city, and the canons returned public thanks to their idols for the death of our reformer. But the prayers of the pious prevailed, and Calvin was so far from falling a victim to the disease, that he seemed, as it were, to be renewed in strength, and commenced an unusually long journey to Franckfort, where he had been invited for the purpose of terminating the disputes of the French church.

Calvin, on his return from Franckfort, though something impaired in his health, did not remit his daily labours, having published, the following year, his remarkably learned Commentaries on the Psalms, accompanied with a very valuable preface. Part of this year, which was very turbulent, and distinguished for tumults, excited by some factious ministers, and by the very great price of wheat, Calvin devoted to the defence of the truth against Joachim Westphal. After Calvin had answered Westphal, in consequence of his continually prating on this subject, I engaged in the controversy myself with a success, by the grace of God, that leaves me no cause to repent of the part I took in this question. Then also the calumnies of Castellio against the eternal providence of God, which he had circulated without affixing his name to the work, were refuted by us both.

The news of the very dreadful persecution of the protestants, which particularly began in Paris, where the congregation in James' Street was seized, assembled for celebrating the Lord's supper, deeply, and in an especial manner affected Calvin. Nearly eighty of them were seized, (the rest escaping by means of the darkness of the night,) and dragged to prison about break of day, with much reproachful and contumelious language, though several ladies were observed among them of the first quality. The courtiers, and circumstances of the times, had awakened the king's anger against

the protestants, for this affliction took place soon after the news had arrived of the defeat of the French at St. Quintin, and their assemblies were held at night, not being permitted to meet in the day. These old and stale calumnies, formerly invented against the first Christians, were again revived by Demochares, a doctor of the Sorbonne, pretending that all the disasters of the state were to be attributed to protestants alone. They procured also false witnesses to prove that the putting out of the lights was followed by prostitution, which many were credulous enough to believe.

Twenty-one of them were condemned to the flames, and, as only seven were executed at a time, this spectacle was exhibited at three different periods, to make the example more dreadful. The first who entered the flames was a lady of rank, whose constancy, and that of other six, particularly of the two last of the young men who suffered, was truly admirable.

This storm was in a great measure assuaged, by detecting the calumny of the doctors of the Sorbonne, though even this did not silence them, by the mother herself appearing before the judges to prove the chastity of her captive daughters. An excellent treatise was likewise published by a very learned pastor, residing for some months in that neighbourhood, who easily refuted all the falsehoods in circulation ; and the earnest intercession of an embassy from the German princes, procured by Calvin's exertions with the utmost speed, assisted to allay this storm of dreadful persecution. The following year shone forth with great happiness upon the state of Geneva, by a perpetual alliance between the inhabitants of Geneva and Berne, contrary to the expectation of such as had been banished from the first city. Several unpleasant occurrences from other quarters diminished this happiness, beside the last abortive efforts of the exiles, which I shall wholly pass over.

The persecution abroad was rekindled in France, and the most mischievous and terrible heresy of the Tritheists, re-

vived from the ashes of Servetus, by Valentine Gentilis, a native of Cosenza.

For the purpose of affording assistance to those suffering from persecution, an embassy was sent to the princes of Germany, with letters from Calvin, to demand their intercession in the calamities of the church, which they depicted with great feeling. Calvin in the mean time strengthened the hands of the persecuted, by keeping up a constant correspondence with them.

I will give a brief statement of the whole proceedings with Gentilis, and an account of the death of this monster. For the whole of this history is faithfully related in part by Calvin himself, from the public acts, and partly by Benedict Aretius, minister at Berne, having added a refutation of the blasphemies uttered by this heretic. All these treatises, and some others pertaining to the same subject, were published in this city in the 1567th year of our Lord.

Shortly after the death of Servetus, Gentilis, possessed of a sagacious, but vacillating and sophistical understanding, meeting, some time after the punishment of Servetus, with his work, and its refutation by Calvin, easily perceived that neither the phantasms nor ideas of Servetus to colour the heresy of Paul of Samosata, nor the confusion of the persons with the essence introduced by Sabellius, nor the fictitious deity of Christ, taught by the impure Arius, could be reconciled with the word of God. Perceiving also that the views given us in Scripture, with regard to three distinct persons in one essence, are above our comprehension, he did not, as is usual with such characters, submit himself to the wisdom of God, but was satisfied with the truth of such opinions as were agreeable to human reason. He attributed the monarchy and supreme authority to the person of the Father alone, whom he would have to be the only sovereign God. He began openly to avow the doctrine of essentialiation, namely, the propagation of essence, and as there were three persons, so there must be three numerically distinct essences, that is to

say, three Gods, eternal, almighty, and immense. To maintain this heresy, he perverted, with matchless impudence, the Scriptures, and the council of Nice, for he wholly renounced the Athanasian Creed, and wrested the more ancient writers of the church, Ignatius, Tertullian, Irenæus, and Lactantius, to support his opinions. For he not only rejected all the orthodox divines, followers of the Nicene council, but treated them with scorn, as guilty of impiety. This blasphemy was the forerunner of others concerning the hypostatic union.

At first he proposed his opinions privately among a few, and particularly to John Paul Alciat, a military officer, from Milan, and George Blandrata, a physician of Salusses, professing only to consider it as a subject for discussion. But the presbytery of the Italian church at Geneva, having been informed of this circumstance, convened an extraordinary assembly, at which, in the hearing of a certain number of senators chosen for the occasion, and of all the ministers and elders, the reasons adduced in support of that doctrine were patiently considered by Calvin, and refuted from the word of God. This conference induced all the Italians to sign the orthodox faith, with the exception of six, who shortly afterwards, being examined separately, subscribed it with their hands, but not, as the event proved, with their hearts. Gentilis, returning to his former habits and dispositions, was found again disseminating the same blasphemous opinions ; he used no dissimulation on his arrest, and had as long and as frequent an audience granted him as he desired. At last, as if vanquished, for he could answer Calvin by nothing but obstinacy, he feigned an incredible repentance, a copy of which is yet extant, signed by his own hand. To be brief, he openly renounced his opinions in the streets, and was dismissed, after taking an oath that he would not leave the city. But, regardless of this obligation, he soon after fled to Grimaldo in Savoy, and was some time after followed by Alciat and Blandrata. These two last retired to Transylvania and

the adjoining countries, where they destroyed the faith by disseminating their heretical opinions.

Gentilis, the judgment of God even then hanging over him, continued with Gribaldo, since they both despised their other associates for want of learning and skill, and prepared a work against Athanasius and Calvin. From Savoy he went to Lyons, where he had it printed, and dedicated the preface to the prefect of Gez, who was wholly unacquainted with their crimes. He was afterwards, I know not how, arrested at Lyons, when, on acquainting them with his writing against Calvin, he was dismissed, as one who had deserved well of the catholic church. From thence he went to Moravia to visit Blandrata, Alciat, and others, in no respects better than himself. When he could not agree with them, because the greater part had forsaken Tritheism, and embraced the doctrines of Paul of Samosata, he returned to Savoy to his friend Gribaldo, as if Christ, by his own hand, were dragging him to punishment. But another plague had taken off this pest of the church. By this time also we were deprived of Calvin. After this, either from madness, or because he trusted none could overcome him in argument since Calvin's death, he went immediately to the prefect of Gez, whose indignation he had justly merited. On recognising Gentilis, the prefect sent him to Berne, by the just judgment of God, to plead his cause, in consequence of the former change of his opinions, when he was convicted of perjuries and manifest wickedness. Every effort having afterwards been used to restore him to the right path, without success, he was beheaded, and justly punished according to his numerous crimes. Such was the issue of this affair.

And even now there are not wanting many excellent advocates of Christianity, both catholics and ubiquitarians, who dare calumniate Calvin as the author of these blasphemies, nay, as one who had opened a door to Atheism and Mahometanism. These men, sunk in ignorance, were altogether unacquainted with the fact, that Calvin was the first, and

almost the only person in our time, who with so much labour proved the falsehood and error of these blasphemies.

The cardinal, at Paris, by whose direction the king transacted all the affairs of state, endeavoured to remove trials for heresy from the ordinary judges and laymen, to the triumvirate of cardinals. The parliament of Paris opposing this plan, more by divine interference than any human exertions, on the ground of the cardinal pleading his own, not Christ's cause, he abandoned the whole of his intended wicked scheme.

This last year was the commencement of a still greater source of grief to us, for Calvin was seized with a quartan fever in the month of October, and the result of our experience has too strongly confirmed the prognostic sentiments of our physicians, that this disease is fatal to men of advanced life. For though the duration of this disorder was only for eight months, it reduced his body, thin and worn out with labours and constant exertions, to a state of debility from which he never afterwards completely recovered. By the advice of his physicians, and at the request of his friends, that he should at length pay some regard to his health, he necessarily omitted his public sermons and lectures in divinity. He still however continued to devote day and night to the dictating and writing of various letters to different parts of Europe, and very frequently uttered the following sentence: "How unpleasant to me is an idle life!" though even then such of us as enjoyed a good state of health, might justly be regarded idlers when compared with him. A clear proof of this is afforded by his publishing the last edition of his "Institutes of the Christian Religion," both in the Latin and French languages. He this year published rather entirely new Commentaries upon Isaiah, than a revision of his former labours on that prophet, as they had been given to the world by Galar, who took them down in writing from the lips of Calvin when lecturing on that part of Scripture.

The following year was distinguished by the peace of Chateau Cambresis, and the alliance concluded between two of the

most powerful kings of Europe, Ferdinand of Spain, and Henry 2 of France. The republic of Geneva would, perhaps, have been destroyed this year, had not the plans of the papists, who abused the unsuspecting disposition of Henry, been providentially prevented. Henry undoubtedly enacted the most severe laws against the protestants, and imprisoned some of the senators, who contended only for mildness in religious affairs, until a general council should be convened. The first step proposed to be taken for the destruction of Geneva was the restoring of the territory of Savoy to its former governor the duke. Calvin, though feeble in body, steadily continued his labours in Geneva, confirmed the churches most severely afflicted by such a trial, together with all the brethren, and never ceased during this eventful period, to solicit aid from the Lord with unremitting and importunate supplications. But, behold ! in the midst of this terror, whose powerful influence extended in all directions, both near and remote, the King of France, in preparing for the celebration of the nuptials which confirmed the peace, received a mortal wound in a tournament, inflicted by the hand of the prefect of the royal guards, to whom the king had a short time before given orders to arrest those senators who pleaded for mild treatment in religious transactions. The following conduct of Cardinal Lorrain showed his wish to appear desirous to expiate the untimely fate of King Henry, by causing Annes du Bourge to undergo the most unjust death on the 21st of December, a counsellor of the most extensive learning, a senator of the most unshaken integrity, and of the most distinguished holiness, who at last suffered as a martyr for Christ.

Geneva, however, by the peculiar favour of God, during that very period,—a circumstance almost beyond the bounds of credibility, as if the Lord had again repeatedly caused a most shining light to arise from the midst of the thickest darkness,—was inspired with such confidence, that in the very year, and almost moment, when those powerful princes were

conspiring for its destruction, the inhabitants, encouraged by Calvin, erected splendid buildings for a public seminary. Eight masters for youth, and several public professors of Hebrew and Greek, philosophy and divinity, adorned this college. It was dedicated in a solemn manner, before a full assembly of the people, in the first church of that city, to the most high and holy God, where the laws which related to the object of this most useful and pious institution, and its perpetual confirmation, were for the first time read and published.

In the following year Calvin was invidiously accused by some, of having excited certain leaders against Francis 2nd, heir of the kingdom of France, in the disastrous tumults which took place between the papists and protestants at Amboise. Calvin, however, I know for a certainty, had never been made acquainted with this insurrection, and he always openly disapproved, in conversation, as well as by letters sent to his friends, of such violent attempts on the part of the reformed.

Francis Stancarus, of Mantua, as if Italy was doomed to be ruinous to the religious prosperity of Poland, began this year to propagate the opinion, that "Christ was Mediator only according to the flesh," and to accuse all those of Arianism who said, "Christ was Mediator in his divine nature," as if the supporters of this doctrine made the Son inferior to the Father. Melancthon, Peter Martyr, and others, refuted, with much solidity of reasoning, this opinion, and calumnious view of Christ's mediatorial character. On the application of the Poles, Calvin also at that time exposed in a very brief, but nervous manner, the fallacy of that error. He at the same time foresaw on this occasion, what afterwards actually happened, that some inexperienced writers on this controversy, if they were not very circumspect, would, from a zeal to refute Stancarus, be in danger of vindicating the heresy of the Tritheists, and he expressly guarded them against Blandrata, and his followers, who had adopted this

view. He was desirous to induce them to maintain the belief that Christ was Mediator in both natures, without multiplying his divinity. This advice, however, had no effect on such as were determined on ruin.

At this time also the Christian brethren, commonly called Waldenses of Bohemia, proposed certain questions to Calvin by two of their number sent to visit him. He satisfied their scruples, as was meet and right, in a kind manner, and exhorted them to enter into a close union with the other churches. At the same time many of the French reformers, after the death of Queen Mary, took refuge in England, relying upon the striking piety and humanity of her most serene highness Queen Elizabeth. The emigrants, with the consent of Edmund Grindal, Bishop of London, requested a minister should be sent from Geneva, for the purpose of establishing a French church there; and Nicholas Gallar was appointed to go to London for that purpose.

At the conclusion of the year 1560, Francis Second, King of France, died very suddenly, and at the very moment when in the midst of general despair, the protestants of that kingdom looked only to God for help.

Scarcely had Charles the 9th, yet a child, commenced his reign, when letters, written in his name, were brought to Geneva by a herald, in which he complained, that persons, sent from that city, were exciting disturbances in his kingdom. He requested their immediate recal, stating, that he would not pass over such a very just ground for revenge, if they refused to comply. Calvin, summoned by the senate, in his own name, and that of his colleagues, returned as answer, that at the request of the French churches, they had advised and exhorted men of tried faith, and unimpeachable life and conversation, and on whose qualifications for such a purpose they relied, to be in readiness to assist their country, when soliciting the aid of their own people in the sacred cause of establishing a pure church. In undertaking this measure, they had not intended to excite disturbances in the

state, but to teach the gospel of peace ; and they were prepared, if any other accusation were alleged against them, to answer their opponents in the presence of the king himself. This business proceeded no further. Calvin and myself answered this year a work written by Tileman Heshusius, a most light and unreasonable author. Calvin afterwards refuted the blasphemies then published at Lyons by Valentine Gentilis, against the creed of St. Athanasius. Calvin, in the dedication of his Lectures on the prophet Daniel to the French churches, declares, as in a prophetic voice, that tempestuous and severe trials were hanging over their heads. At this very time a conference between the Romish prelates and the reformed ministers was held at Poissy, when Beza, in this august assembly of the realm, presented to King Charles 9th the confession of faith approved by the French churches, and many promised themselves the speedy subversion of popery. During this session Francis Baldwin, afterwards denominated Changeling, because he had altered his religious sentiments at least three, if not four, times, and who before the last melancholy disaster that befel the French churches on the 24th of August, 1572, as appeared from the testimony of men of the greatest virtue and piety, was very desirous even then to be united with the protestants, and letters to this effect, written by the good Baldwin himself, were produced at the synod. He, being suborned by Cardinal Lorrain, and reconciled to the King of Navarre by base intrigues, offered a book to sale in the palace, published either by himself, or more probably by Cassander, who assumed the name pious and moderate, which was worse than the Interim of Charles the 5th, because, under the mask of moderation, it defended all the corruptions of popery. Calvin, being informed by Beza of this circumstance, published a refutation of this work, to which soon after some additions were made, that disclosed to every one the character and intention of Baldwin. This answer of Calvin, and another by Beza, excited the indignation of the lawyer, who continued, during the remainder of

his life, to attack Calvin in the most vile manner. He died, and at the same time ceased railing, in the year 1574, equally odious to God, to papists, and protestants, who had been so frequently deceived by him, in the act either of carrying on a certain law-suit in Paris, or pining away with envy, when he saw another person chosen in preference to himself, for the purpose of accompanying Henry the 3rd on his journey into Poland. In the year 1562, the French churches not only enjoyed peace, but toleration, sanctioned on certain terms by the royal edict itself. The King of Navarre was afterwards, by the artifices of the papists, suborned, when the Duke of Guise sounded the trumpet, perpetrated the horrid massacre at Vassy, and commenced, under such auspices, that civil war which continued during twelve years to involve wretched France in the horrors of one general conflagration. Language can convey no idea of the number and extent of cares on account of the afflictions of the church, which grieved Calvin's mind, whose bodily infirmities were likewise so much increased, that it might even then be easily foreseen he was hastily advancing to a better state of existence. He, still, however continued to comfort and encourage such as suffered under affliction, and to preach, and deliver lectures on divinity. Calvin, this year, in the name of the Prince of Conde, and of all the pious, presented a very beautiful confession of faith to the states of the empire, then assembled at Franckfort, as an answer to the calumnies which had been circulated in Germany, concerning the reformers.

It affords us satisfaction-to mention, in this place, a circumstance that deserves to be stated. On the 19th of December, which was the Sabbath, the north wind having been unusually high for two days, Calvin (although confined to bed by the gout) said, in the hearing of a number of friends, "I know not indeed what it means; I thought I heard last night a very loud sound of drums used in war, and I could not divest myself of the opinion that it was a reality. I entreat you let us pray, for some event of

very great moment is undoubtedly taking place." On this very day the battle at Dreux, distinguished for its great cruelty, was fought, the news of which reached Geneva a few days after.

In the following year, 1563, his bodily infirmities became so severe and complicated, that it is indeed incredible that such a brave and noble soul could have been any longer confined in a body of so much weakness, exhausted by so many labours, and worn down at last by such a variety of diseases. Yet when his body was even in such a state of debility, he could not be induced to spare himself. Nay, if at any period he relinquished his public duties, which he always did very much against his inclination, he still continued, in his own house, to give advice to such as consulted him, or, unfatigued himself, wearied his amanuensis by dictating to him. His two very serious Exhortations to the Polonese against the blasphemous enemies of the holy Trinity, his full answers, both oral and written, to the deputies of the synod of Lyons, his Commentaries on the four Books of Moses, written first in Latin, and translated by himself into French, and his Commentary on Joshua, his last undertaking, which he commenced this year, and finished on his death-bed, afford ample testimony to the truth of this assertion.

On the 6th of February, 1564, the beginning of his eternal happiness, and of our greatest and most long-continued grief, he delivered his last sermon with difficulty, in consequence of asthmatic oppression. From this period he taught no more in public, except that he was carried at different times, until the last day of March, to the meeting of the congregation, and addressed them in a few words. His diseases, contracted by incredible labours of mind and body, were various and complicated, as he states himself, in a letter written to his physicians at Montpelier. He was naturally of a spare and feeble frame, tending to consumption; during sleep he seemed almost awake, and spent a great part of the year in preaching, teaching, and dictating. For at least ten

years he never dined, and the only food he took was at supper, so that it is astonishing how he could so long escape consumption. He frequently suffered from megrim, which he cured only by fasting, so as occasionally to refrain from food for thirty-six hours. But by overstraining his voice, and, as was discovered too late, by an immoderate use of aloes, he suffered from hemorrhoids, which degenerated into ulcers, and five years before his death he was occasionally attacked by a spitting of blood. Gout in the right leg, frequently returning pains of colic, and stone, which he had only felt a few months before his death, followed the removal of the quartan fever. The physicians neglected no remedies, and he observed the directions of his medical attendants with a strictness which none could surpass. In other respects, where the labours of the mind were concerned, he was so very careless of his health, that the most excruciating pains of the megrim never interrupted his preaching. Though tormented by so many diseases, no one ever heard him utter a word unbecoming a man of bravery, much less a Christian. Only lifting up his eyes to heaven, he used to say, "How long, O Lord!" for even in health he often had this sentence on his lips, when he spoke of the calamities of his brethren, with whose sufferings he was both day and night more afflicted than with any of his own. When admonished and entreated by us to forbear, at least in his sickness, from the labour of dictating, or at least of writing, "What, then," he said, "would you have my Lord find me idle when he cometh?"

On the 10th of March, we, his brother ministers, on paying our visit together as usual, found him dressed, and sitting at the little table, where he was accustomed to write or study. On seeing us, he sat silent, resting his forehead on his hand for some length of time, as he frequently did when engaged in study and meditation; and then, with a voice occasionally interrupted, but a kind and cheerful countenance, he said, "I return you, dearest brethren, my most hearty thanks for all your solicitude on my account, and hope in a

fortnight I shall be present, for the last time, at your consistory," (which was established for discipline of morals,) "for I think that the Lord will then manifest his pleasure with respect to me, and take me to himself." He did attend the consistory on the 24th of March, as usual, and when the business was finished in a peaceable manner, he observed, that he felt some further continuance was granted him by the Lord. He then took up a French New Testament, read to us himself some of the marginal annotations, and requested the opinion of his brethren, since he had undertaken to correct them. He was worse on the following day, having been fatigued with the labours of the preceding; but on the 27th he was carried to the door of the senate house, and being supported by two of his attendants, walked into the hall, and after proposing a new rector of the school to the senate, he uncovered his head, and returned them thanks for the favours already conferred upon him, and particularly for their attentions in his last illness. "For," he said, "I think I have entered this house for the last time." Having uttered these words with difficulty, and a faltering voice, he took his last farewell of the senate, overwhelmed with sorrow, and bathed in tears. On the 2nd of April, which was Easter day, although suffering from great debility, he was carried to church in a chair, was present with the whole congregation, received the Lord's supper from my hand, and joined in singing the hymn, with a trembling voice, but with manifest expressions of joy shining forth from his dying countenance. On the 25th of April he made his will in the following manner :

#### THE WILL OF JOHN CALVIN.

In the name of the Lord.—Amen. In the year 1564, and 25th day of April, I, Peter Chenalat, citizen and notary of Geneva, do witness and declare, that I was sent for by that excellent character, John Calvin, minister of the word of God in this church of Geneva, and enrolled citizen of the same, who, being indisposed in body, but sound in mind,

said he was desirous to make his testament, and to express the judgment of his last will; and requested me to take it down, and write what he should dictate and declare by word of mouth; which I profess I immediately did, and wrote down word by word as he pronounced and dictated, without omission or addition, in the following form, dictated by him:

In the name of the Lord.—Amen. I, John Calvin, minister of the word of God in the church of Geneva, finding myself so much oppressed and afflicted with various diseases, that I think the Lord God has determined speedily to remove me out of this world, have ordered to be made and written, my testament, and declaration of my last will, in form and manner following: First, I give thanks to God, that taking compassion on me whom he had created, and placed in this world, he not only delivered me by his power out of the deep darkness of idolatry, into which I was plunged, that he might bring me into the light of his gospel, and make me a partaker of the doctrine of salvation, of which I was most unworthy; that with the same goodness and mercy he has graciously and kindly borne with my multiplied transgressions and sins, for which I deserved to be rejected and cut off by him; and has also exercised towards me such great compassion and clemency, that he has condescended to use my labour in preaching and publishing the truth of his gospel. I also testify and declare, that it is my full intention to pass the remainder of my life in the same faith and religion, which he has delivered to me by his gospel; having no other defence or refuge of salvation than his gratuitous adoption, on which alone my safety depends. I also embrace with my whole heart the mercy which he exercises towards me for the sake of Jesus Christ, atoning for my crimes by the merits of his death and passion, that in this way satisfaction may be made for all my transgressions and offences, and the remembrance of them blotted out. I farther testify and declare that, as a suppliant, I humbly implore of him to grant me to be so washed and purified by the blood of that sovereign Redeemer,

shed for the sins of the human race, that I may be permitted to stand before his tribunal in the image of the Redeemer himself. I likewise declare, that according to the measure of grace and mercy which God has vouchsafed me, I have diligently made it my endeavour, both in my sermons, writings, and commentaries, purely and uncorruptly to preach his word, and faithfully to interpret his sacred Scriptures. I testify and declare, that in all the controversies and disputes, which I have conducted with the enemies of the gospel, I have made use of no craftiness, nor corrupt and sophistical arts, but have been engaged in defending the truth with candour and sincerity.

But, alas! my study, and my zeal, if they deserve the name, have been so remiss and languid, that I confess innumerable things have been wanting in me to discharge the duties of my office in an excellent manner; and unless the infinite bounty of God had been present, all my study would have been vain and transient. I also acknowledge that unless the same goodness had accompanied me, the endowments of mind bestowed upon me by God, must have made me more and more chargeable with guilt and inactivity before his tribunal. And on these grounds I witness and declare, that I hope for no other refuge of salvation than this alone,—that since God is a Father of mercy, he will show himself a Father to me, who confess myself a miserable sinner. Further, I will, after my departure out of this life, that my body be committed to the earth in that manner, and with those funeral rites, which are usual in this city and church, until the day of the blessed resurrection shall come. As for the small patrimony which God has bestowed upon me, and which I have determined to dispose of in this will, I appoint Anthony Calvin, my very dearly beloved brother, my heir, but only as a mark of respect. Let him take charge of, and keep as his own, my silver goblet, which was given me as a present by Mr. Varanne: and I desire he will be content with it. As for the residue of my property, I commit it to his care with

this request, that he restore it to his children at his death. I bequeath also to the school for boys, ten golden crowns, to be given by my brother and legal heir, and to poor strangers the same sum. Also to Jane, daughter of Charles Costans, and of my half-sister by the paternal side, the sum of ten crowns. Furthermore, I wish my heir to give, on his death, to Samuel and John, sons of my said brother, my nephews, out of my estate, each forty crowns, after his death; and to my nieces Ann, Susan, and Dorothy, each thirty golden crowns. To my nephew David, as a proof of his light and trifling conduct, I bequeath only twenty-five golden crowns.

This is the sum of all the patrimony and property which God hath given me, as far as I am able to ascertain, in books, moveables, my whole household furniture, and all other goods and chattels. Should it however prove more, I desire it may be equally distributed between my nephews and nieces aforesaid, not excluding my nephew David, should he, by the favour of God, return to a useful manner of life.

Should it however exceed the sum already written, I do not think it will be attended with much difficulty, especially after paying my just debts, which I have given in charge to my said brother, on whose fidelity and kindness I confide. On this account I appoint him executor of this my last testament with Laurence de Normandie, a character of tried worth, giving them full power and authority, without a more exact command and order of court, to make an inventory of my goods. I give them also power to sell my moveables, that from the money thus procured they may fulfil the conditions of my above-written will, which I have set forth and declared this 25th of April, in the year of our Lord 1564.

JOHN CALVIN.

When I, Peter Chenalat, the above-mentioned notary, had written this last will, the same John Calvin immediately confirmed it by his usual subscription and hand-writing. On

the following day, April 26th, 1564, the same tried character, John Calvin, commanded me to be called, together with Theodore Beza, Raymond Chauvet, Michael Cops, Louis Enoch, Nicholas Colladon, James de Bordes, ministers and preachers of the word of God in this church of Geneva, and also the excellent Henry Scringer, professor of arts, all citizens of Geneva, and in their presence he hath declared and testified that he dictated to me this his will in the words and form above written. He ordered me also to recite it in their hearing, who had been called for that purpose, which I profess to have done, with a loud voice, and in an articulate manner. After thus reading it aloud, he testified and declared it to be his last will and testament, and desired it to be ratified and confirmed. As a testimony and corroboration of this, he requested them all to witness the same will with their hands. This was immediately done by them on the day and year above written, at Geneva, in the street called the Canons, in the house of the said testator. In proof and witness of this I have written and subscribed with my own hand, and sealed with the common seal of our supreme magistrate, the will above mentioned.

P. CHENALAT.

Having made this will, Calvin sent to inform the four syndics, and all the senators, that he wished once more, before he departed this life, to address them in the senate-room, whither he hoped to be carried the following day. The senators answered, they would rather come to him, and requested him to have a regard to his health. The next day they all repaired from the senate-room to the house of Calvin. After mutual salutations, and an apology on his part, because they had waited on him, when it was his duty to have visited them, he commenced by stating "that he had for some time desired to have this interview, but deferred it until he felt more certainly assured of his dissolution." He then said, "I return you my warmest thanks, honoured Lords, for conferring

such great honours on me, who had done nothing to merit them, and for manifesting such forbearance towards my numerous infirmities, which I always considered the strongest proof of your uncommon kindness. Though in the discharge of my ministerial duty I have been engaged in various disputes, and have endured numerous insults, a necessary part of the trials even of the best characters, yet I know and acknowledge that none of these have befallen me from any fault of yours. I earnestly entreat you also, if I have not performed my duty in any instance as I ought, to ascribe it rather to want of ability, than to want of will to serve you. For I can testify with sincerity, that I have felt a deep and lively interest in the welfare of your republic; and, if I have not fully discharged all the duties of my station, I have certainly exerted myself to the utmost in promoting the public welfare.

"Were I not to acknowledge that the Lord has sometimes on his part condescended to grant that my services have not been altogether without advantage to you, I should justly deserve to be charged with dissimulation. But I again earnestly entreat your pardon for having performed so little either in my private or public capacity, in comparison with what I ought to have done. I certainly grant, with the greatest readiness, that I am very much indebted to you on account of your patience in enduring that vehemence of mine, which has sometimes been immoderate. I trust God himself has pardoned all these my sins.

"Touching the doctrine you have heard from me, I testify that I have not taught the word of God intrusted to me in a rash and uncertain manner, but with purity and sincerity. Had I acted otherwise, I should have been as fully assured of God's anger, already impending over my head, as I now feel confident that my labours in teaching have not been displeasing to him. And I testify this before God, and in your presence, so much the more willingly, because I cannot doubt that Satan, after his usual manner, will raise up wicked,

vain, light-minded, ambitious men, to corrupt the sound doctrine which you have heard from me as the servant of God."

Then; passing to those immense benefits which they had received from the Lord, he said, " I am the person who can best testify from how many and great dangers the hand of the Lord hath delivered you. You see, moreover, in what circumstances you are placed. Whether in prosperity or adversity, keep this truth, I beseech you, constantly before your eyes,—that it is God alone who can give stability to kingdoms and states, and on this account it is his pleasure to be worshipped by mortal men. Remember it was the testimony of the illustrious David, that he fell when he enjoyed profound peace; from which he never would have arisen, had not the Lord, with singular favour, stretched out his own hand to his relief. What then may the lot be of such little weak mortals, when this prince, distinguished for power and fortitude, experienced such a fall! It requires, therefore, great humility of mind, that you may walk with care and great fear of God, relying on his defence alone. You will thus be assured of the continuance of the same protection which you have hitherto so often in reality experienced, and may proceed with stability under his aid, even when your safety and security may, as it were, hang suspended from a slender thread. If your affairs are prosperous, be careful, I request you, not to exalt yourself, like the profane, but rather, with deep submission of mind, return thanks to God for all your blessings. If your affairs are adverse, and death, therefore, surrounds you on all sides, still trust in him who raises up even the dead. Nay, consider on such an occasion with the greatest earnestness, that God is in this manner awaking you from sloth, that you may learn more fully to look to him alone with entire confidence.

" If you would preserve this republic in security, see to it with unremitting care, that the sacred seat of authority, in which God hath placed you, be not defiled with the pollution

of sin ; for he is the only sovereign God, King of kings, and Lord of all lords, who will honour those that honour him ; but, on the other hand, will cast down, and cover with disgrace, those by whom he is despised. Worship him, therefore, according to his precepts, and let your minds be more and more intensely directed to the obeying of his will, for we are always at a very great distance from the performance of our duty. I know the temper and manner of you all, and am aware of your needing exhortation. There is none, even of those who excel, without many imperfections ; and let each in this case examine himself with care, and ask of the Lord the supply of his known deficiencies.

“ We see what vices reign in the greatest number of the assemblies convened in the world. Some, cold and indifferent to the public interest, pursue with eagerness their own private emoluments ; others, are only intent upon the gratification of their own passions ; some make a bad use of the distinguished talents bestowed upon them by God ; while others are vain-glorious, and confidently demand that the rest of their fellow-counsellors should sanction their opinions.

“ I admonish the aged not to envy such young persons as they find to be endowed by God with particular gifts ; and I warn younger persons to conduct themselves with modesty, and to avoid all presumption. Let there be no interruption of one another in the performance of your duties. Shun animosities, and all that acrimony which has diverted so many from a proper line of conduct in the discharge of their office. You will avoid these evils, if each of you confines himself within his proper sphere, and all perform with fidelity the part intrusted to them by the state. In civil trials I beseech you to avoid all favour, or enmity ; use no crooked arts to pervert justice ; let none, by any plausible address of his own, prevent the laws from having their due effect ; nor depart from equity and goodness. If the evil passions excite temptation in any one, let him resist them with firmness, and look to Him by whom he has been placed

on the seat of judgment, and ask the same God for the guidance of his Holy Spirit.

"Finally, I beseech you to pardon all my infirmities, which I acknowledge and confess before God, and his angels, and in your presence also, my honourable lords."

Having finished his discourse, he offered up a prayer to the almighty and most merciful God, to shower down upon them, in still greater abundance, his best gifts, and by his Holy Spirit to direct all their consultations to the welfare of the whole republic. He then gave his right hand to each separately, and bade them adieu. All the senators departed in tears, manifesting deep sorrow, as if it was their last interview with a common father.

Calvin addressed all of us ministers under the jurisdiction of Geneva, who were assembled in his chamber, and at his request, on the 28th of April, in the following terms:—  
"Stand fast, my brethren, after my decease, in the work which you have begun, and be not discouraged, for the Lord will preserve this church and republic against the threats of its enemies. Let all divisions be removed far from you, and embrace one another with mutual charity. Consider on all occasions what you owe to the church in which the Lord hath stationed you, and let nothing draw you from it. It will indeed be easy for such as are wearied of their flocks to find means for escaping from their duty by intrigue, but they will learn by experience that the Lord cannot be deceived.

"On my first arrival in this city the gospel was indeed preached, but every thing was in the greatest confusion, as if Christianity consisted in nothing else than the overturning of images. Not a few wicked men arose in the church, from whom I suffered many great indignities; but the Lord our God himself so strengthened me, and banished all fear even from my mind, who am by no means distinguished for natural courage (I state the real fact), that I was enabled to resist all their attempts. I returned hither from Strasburg, in obedience to a call, against my inclination; because I thought it

would not be productive of any advantage. I knew not what the Lord had determined, and my situation was full of very many, and very great difficulties. But proceeding in this work, I perceived at length that the Lord had in reality blessed my labours. Do you, therefore, brethren, persist in your vocation ; preserve the established order ; use at the same time every exertion to retain the people in obedience to the doctrine delivered, for there are yet among you some wicked and stubborn characters. Affairs, as you see, are not now in an unsettled state, on which account you will be more criminal before God, if they are subverted by your inactivity. I declare, my brethren, that I have lived united with you in the strictest bonds of true and sincere affection, and I now take my leave of you with the same feelings. If you have at any time found me too peevish under my disease, I entreat your forgiveness, and I return you my warmest thanks, because during my confinement you have discharged the burden of the duties assigned me."

After this address he reached out his right hand to each of us, and we then took leave of him with hearts overwhelmed with sorrow and grief, and eyes flowing with tears.

On the 2nd of May, having been informed by Farel, in a letter, that he was determined, though now eighty years old, and in a state of health rendered infirm by age, to come and see him from Neuchatel, for Viret's residence was at a yet greater distance, he thus answered him in Latin :—

" Farewell, my best and most faithful brother ! and since God is pleased you should survive me in this world, live mindful of our friendship, which has been of service to the church of God, and whose fruits we shall enjoy in heaven. Do not expose yourself to fatigue on my account. I respire with difficulty, and continually expect to draw my last breath. It is sufficient happiness for me that I live and die in Christ, who is gain to his people in life and death. Again farewell, with the brethren.—Geneva, 2nd May, 1564."

The good old man, however, came to Geneva, and after

they had enjoyed an interview with each other, he returned the next day to Neuchatel.

Calvin spent the remainder of his days, until death, in almost constant prayer. His voice indeed was interrupted by the difficulty of respiration; but his eyes, which retained their brilliancy to the last, uplifted to heaven, and his serene countenance, were certain proofs of the fervour of his devotion, and of his trust and confidence in God. He often in his prayers repeated the words of David, "Lord, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it;" and at times those of Hezekiah, "I did mourn like a dove." Once also I heard him say, "Thou, Lord, bruiseſt me, but I am abundantly ſatisfied, ſince it is thy hand." His doors must have stood open day and night, if all had been admitted, who from ſentiments of duty were desirous to see him; but as he could not, from difficulty in speaking, direct his discourse to them, he requested they would rather pray for him, than be solicitous about paying their visits. Often, also, though I always found him glad to receive me, he was very ſcrupulous respecting the least interruptions thus given to the duties of my office, so sparing was he of the time which he knew ought to be spent in the ſervice of the church; and his conscientious feelings, leſt he ſhould give the ſmallest trouble to his friends, exceeded the bounds of moderation. Such was the manner of comforting both himself and friends until the 19th of May, when we ministers were accustomed to meet relative to the censure of morals, and to take a friendly meal together two days before Whitsuntide, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He expressed a wish that the common supper ſhould on this day be prepared at his house, and rallying his little strength that remained, was carried from his bed to the adjoining chamber, when he ſaid, "I come to see you, my brethren, for the last time, never more to sit down with you at table." Such was the commencement of one of the most melancholy repasts we ever took. He then offered up a prayer, took a ſmall portion of food, and diſcourſed with us at ſupper in as cheerful a

manner as his weakness permitted. Before supper was fully finished, he ordered himself to be carried back to the adjoining chamber, and addressing the company with a distinctly smiling countenance, said, "This intervening wall will not prevent me from being present with you in spirit, though absent in body." His prediction was fulfilled, for from this day he always lay in an horizontal posture, his small body, except his countenance, which was very little changed, being so much emaciated, that breath only remained. On the 27th of May, the day of his death, he appeared stronger, and spoke with less difficulty; but this was the last effort of nature, for about eight o'clock in the evening certain symptoms of dissolution suddenly manifested themselves. When one of his domestics brought one of the brethren, and me, who had only just left him, this intelligence, I returned immediately with all speed, and found he had died in so very tranquil a manner, that without his feet and hands being in any respect discomposed, or his breathing increased, his senses, judgment, and in some measure his voice, remaining entire to his very last gasp, he appeared more to resemble one in a state of sleep than death.

Thus this splendid light of the reformation was taken from us with the setting sun. During that night, and the following day, great lamentations prevailed throughout the city, for the republic regretted the want of one of its wisest citizens, the church deplored the death of its faithful pastor, the college sorrowed for such an incomparable professor, and all grieved for the loss of a common parent and comforter bestowed upon them by God himself. Many of the citizens were desirous to see him after he was dead, and could with difficulty be torn from his remains. Some strangers, also, who had come from a distance with a view to see and hear him, among whom was the very distinguished English ambassador to the French court, were very desirous to see only the body of the deceased. At first, indeed, they were admitted; but afterwards, because the curiosity was excessive, and it was

necessary to silence the calumnies of enemies, his friends considered the best plan would be to close the coffin next morning, being the Lord's Day; his corpse, as usual, having been wrapped in a linen cloth. At two o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, his body was carried to the common burying-place, called Plein Palais, without extraordinary pomp. His funeral, however, was attended by the members of the senate, the pastors, all the professors of the college, and a great proportion of the citizens. The abundance of tears shed on this occasion afforded the strongest evidence of the sense which they entertained of their loss. According to his own directions, no hillock, no monument was erected to his memory, on which account I wrote the following epitaph:—

Why in this humble and unnoticed tomb  
Is Calvin laid—the dread of falling Rome,  
Mourn'd by the good, and by the wicked fear'd,  
By all who knew his excellence revered;  
From whom ev'n virtue's self might virtue learn,  
And young and old its value may discern?  
'Twas modesty, his constant friend on earth,  
That laid this stone, unsculptured with a name;  
Oh! happy turf, enrich'd with Calvin's worth,  
More lasting far than marble is thy fame!

He lived fifty-four years, ten months, and seventeen days, and spent half of this time in the sacred ministry of the gospel. His stature was of the middle size; his complexion dark and pale; his eyes, brilliant even till death, expressed the acuteness of his understanding. His dress, neither highly ornamented nor slovenly, was well suited to his singular modesty; his victuals were so moderate that they were very far removed from the pride of luxury, or the littleness of parsimony; his diet was very sparing, since during many years he took only one meal a day, assigning the weakness of his stomach as the cause. He lived nearly without sleep. His power of memory was almost incredible; so that he could immediately recognise,

after the lapse of many years, any whom he had only once seen ; and though he had been frequently interrupted for many hours while in the act of dictating, he would, without being reminded, forthwith resume the thread of his subject ; and never forget, though overpowered by an infinite multiplicity of business, such things as it was important for him in his ministerial character to know. His judgment was so sound and exact on all subjects, that his decisions seemed almost oracular ; nor do I remember an instance of any error being committed by those who followed his advice.

He despised an artificial eloquence, and was sparing in his words, but an accomplished writer ; and no theologian, until the present time, it may be said, without disparaging any, hath written with greater purity, gravity, and judgment than Calvin, though none either in our own age, or that of our fathers, has written so much as our author. By close study, during his youth, by uncommon accuracy of judgment, confirmed by the practice of dictating to an amanuensis, he was always able to speak with propriety and gravity, and his language in conversation differed very little from his written compositions. The consistency and uniformity of his doctrine from first to last, are scarcely to be paralleled in any divine of the present time. With respect to his manners, though he was naturally grave, yet, in the intercourse of social life, no one was distinguished by more suavity. He exercised great prudence and forbearance towards all such infirmities in others, as are consistent with integrity, so that he did not overawe, or raise the blush in his weak brethren, by unseasonable or too severe reproof, nor cherish their vices by connivance or adulation. He was as severe and indignant an enemy of flattery and dissimulation, and of every kind of wickedness, especially where religion was concerned, as he was a keen and ardent friend of truth, simplicity, and candour. He was naturally of an irritable temperament, and this fault was augmented by the excessive laboriousness of his life. But the Spirit of the Lord had so taught him to

moderate his anger, that he was never heard to utter a word unbecoming a good man, or which went beyond the bounds of virtue ; nor did he ever speak with rashness, unless his mind was roused when treating on the subject of religion, or when engaged with obstinate characters.

No attentive reader of the lives of those men who, even in profane history, displayed more than usual attachment to any kind of heroism, will be astonished to find so many excellent qualities and splendid virtues, both of a domestic and public nature, to have called forth such an host of enemies. Nor will any one be surprised that such a most undaunted defender of sound doctrine, and so steady a follower of purity of life, should have experienced such violent opposition from the enemies of true religion and morality. But he will consider this fact chiefly to be worthy of his astonishment, that one man alone, like some Christian Hercules, could have been sufficient for subduing so many monsters by the use of that most powerful club, the word of God. Calvin achieved as many triumphs as Satan raised up enemies to oppose him, for it is certain he had none, among the great crowd of his adversaries, but such as had proclaimed war both against piety and virtue. Those enemies brand Calvin as an heretic, but Christ suffered under the same reproach, and that even from the priests themselves. He was expelled, they say, from Geneva ; true, but he was solicited to return. What happened to the apostles ? What to Athanasius ? What to Chrysostom ? Many other charges are brought against him by another class of enemies, but what are they ? He is charged with ambition, yea, with aspiring at a new Popedom ;—an extraordinary accusation against a man, who preferred this kind of life, this republic, this church, which I may truly call the very seat and abode of poverty, to all other honours. They say again that he coveted wealth. Yet all his worldly goods, including his library, which brought a high price, scarcely amounted to three hundred crowns ; so that he might very justly, as well as very elegantly, in order to refute this calumny of unparalleled impudence, use the following words :

" If I fail in my lifetime to persuade some people that I am not a lover of money, my death will convince them of the contrary." The senate can certainly testify to the smallness of his stipend, and so far was he from being dissatisfied with what they gave him, as positively to refuse an advance when offered. Some object against him, that his brother, Anthony Calvin, divorced his former wife for adultery, when she was discovered. What would they have said had he continued to live with her? If the dishonour of an unchaste female is brought against him, what shall become of the family of Jacob, of David, nay, of the Son of God himself, who expressly marked out a devil, as one of his own disciples? His numerous labours answer the charge of his delighting in luxury and indulgence. Some are not ashamed, both in their speeches and writings, to accuse him of reigning in the church and state at Geneva, where he had, as it were, elevated himself to a high tribunal. Claudius Sponse, of the Sorbonne, the rhapsodist, dared to accuse him, in a very malevolent book, of introducing some living man, wholly unknown, instead of a dead one, whom he pretended to raise to life in the presence of the whole people, which is as disgraceful a falsehood, as if he had said that he was Pope of Rome. What accusation will not some dare to bring against him? But such false statements require no refutation; and neither those who were acquainted with so distinguished a person during his life, nor the judicious in future ages, who shall form their opinion of his character from his writings, will pay the least regard to such gross and unfounded calumnies.

These are the principal events in the life and death of Calvin, which have come under my own immediate observation during the last sixteen years. I feel myself justly warranted to declare, that in him was presented to all men, one of the most beautiful and illustrious examples of the pious life and triumphant death of a real Christian; and as it is easy for malevolence to calumniate his character, so the most exalted virtue will find it difficult to imitate his conduct.

A CATALOGUE  
OF  
JOHN CALVIN'S WRITINGS.

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*Commentaries in Latin and French.*

Commentaries on Genesis.

On the other Four Books of Moses, in the form of a Harmony.

On Joshua.

On the Psalms.

On Isaiah.

On Jeremiah.

On the twenty first Chapters of Ezekiel.

On Daniel.

On the twelve minor Prophets.

On the three Evangelists, in the form of a Harmony.

On John.

On the Acts of the Apostles.

On the Epistles of Paul.

On the Epistle to the Hebrews.

On the Canonical Epistles of Peter, John, James, and Jude.

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*Published Sermons, which were taken down when delivered.*

Three Homilies concerning the Sacrifice of Abraham.

Sermons on Deuteronomy.

Sermons on Samuel.

Sermons on Job.

- Sermons on the Decalogue.  
Sermons on the 119th Psalm.  
Sermons on Hezekiah's Song.  
Sermons on the last eight Chapters of Daniel.  
Sermons on the beginning of the Harmony of the three Gospels.  
Sermons on the 10th and 11th Chapters of the 1st Corinthians.  
Sermons on the Galatians.  
Sermons on the Ephesians.  
Sermons on the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.  
Sermons on the Birth, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ.  
Four Sermons treating on subjects very useful for our times.  
Sermon on the Providence of God and Eternal Election, made to the congregation.  
Sermon on a passage in the Epistle to the Galatians, and an explanation of the last article of the Lord's Prayer, made to the congregation.
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*Sermons which have not been printed.*

- Sermons on Genesis.  
Sermons on the first 18 Chapters of the 1st of Kings.  
Sermons on many of the Psalms.  
Sermons on Isaiah.  
Sermons on Jeremiah.  
Sermons on Ezekiel.  
Sermons on seven of the minor Prophets.  
Sermons on the Harmony of the three Evangelists.  
Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles.  
Sermons on the two Epistles to the Corinthians.  
Sermons on the two Epistles to the Thessalonians.  
Sermons on some Chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews.  
A short explanation of the Book of Joshua, made to the congregation.  
Lectures on the Psalms, from the 37th to the last.

*Catalogue of other printed Works.*

- Commentaries on Seneca, concerning Clemency, in Latin.  
Congratulation to the Rev. Mr. Gabriel Saconay, Precentor  
of the Church at Lyon.—French.  
Answer to a certain Dutchman.—French.  
Answer to Anthony Cathalan.—French.
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*The following Works are written in Latin and French.*

- The Institutes of Religion.  
Psychopannychia, a Treatise against the Error of those who  
believe the Soul sleeps from Death until the Resurrection.  
Two Letters, one on attending Mass, and the other on the  
Duty of a Christian.  
Answer to Cardinal Sadolet's Letter.  
Treatise on the Lord's Supper.  
Song of Victory, sung to Jesus Christ.  
Catechism.  
Form of administering the Sacraments, public Prayers, Form  
of Marriage.  
An Answer to Pighius.  
Remarks on the fatherly Admonitions of Paul III. to the  
Emperor Charles V.  
Antidote against the Articles of the Sorbonne.  
On the Necessity of Reforming the Church.  
On the Errors of the Anabaptists and Libertines.  
On the Reliques of Saints.  
On avoiding Superstitions.  
Answer to the Nicodemites.  
Antidote against the Council of Trent.  
The true way of securing the Peace of the Church, and its  
Reformation, in Answer to the Interim.  
An Exhortation against Judicial Astrology.

- Harmony of the Sacraments.  
Treatise on Scandals.  
On the Eternal Predestination and Providence of God.  
Defence of the Trinity against Servetus.  
Three Exhortations to Westphal.  
Against Heshusius and Stancar.  
Against Valentin Gentilis.  
An Answer to the Calumnies of Castellio.  
A brief Answer to other Calumnies of Castellio.  
Answer to a Changeling Mediator.  
Answer to Baldwin.  
Exhortation to the faithful in Poland.  
A Letter for strengthening this Exhortation.  
Confession of Faith in the French Reformed Churches,  
various Letters, Answers, Exhortations, Advices, in one  
volume, folio.

## DEDICATION.

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JOHN CALVIN

TO

S I M O N   G R Y N É E,

A GENTLEMAN OF THE MOST TRIED WORTH,

WISHES HEALTH.

I REMEMBER, when about three years ago, we entered into familiar conversation with each other concerning the best method of explaining Scripture, that you very much approved of the same plan which appeared to me the most eligible. For both of us thought that the chief excellence of an interpreter consisted in a perspicuous brevity. And, indeed, since almost his only duty is to unfold the mind of the writer, whom he hath undertaken to explain, he misses his mark, or certainly wanders, in some measure, from his design, in proportion as he withdraws his readers from this object. We were therefore desirous that of the number of those, who

intend at present to assist divinity by writing commentaries, some one might arise, who made plainness his chief study, while he laboured not to retard too much the progress of the student by prolix commentaries. And, although I know that this opinion is not universally received, and its opponents adduce arguments in support of their sentiments, yet I cannot be induced to relinquish my attachment to brevity. But since there is a great variety in the human character, and different minds approve of different plans, it is indeed right for every one to enjoy his own view of the subject, provided he is not desirous to make all others submit to his own laws. Such conduct will prevent the friends of brevity from rejecting or despising the labours of those, who are more copious and diffuse in explaining the books of Scripture ; while, on the other hand, the supporters of an opposite opinion will not reject ours, though regarded by them as too compendious and concise. I felt it my duty to make a trial of the aid I could afford the church of God by my own labour. I have not indeed now the confidence to think that I have attained such a method of writing commentaries as then appeared to us the best ; nor did I expect it would be in my power to reach such perfection when I commenced ; but I have attempted to adopt a style of writing, which might prove me to have kept such a plan steadily in view. Since I am unfit to form a judgment of my own work, I leave it to you and to characters like yours

to determine the success which has attended my efforts.

I am fully satisfied that many will blame my design for daring to make a trial of this epistle of Paul in preference to any other. For, since so many writers, of distinguished learning, have already laboured in explaining the Romans, we may fairly conclude that no room remains for others to produce any thing superior to what has already been published. I confess, indeed, though I hoped to write something worthy of attention, yet I was at the first deterred by entertaining in my mind a fear, lest I might be accused of rashness, if I should undertake this labour, after so many authors of distinguished merit. Many ancient and many modern writers have explained this epistle, nor could they devote their attention to a better object, since whoever understands this epistle has a way opened to the knowledge of the whole Scriptures.

I say nothing of the ancient commentators, whose piety, erudition, holiness, and antiquity have secured for them so much authority as prevents us from treating with contempt any work which they have produced. It is unnecessary for me to enumerate all our living commentators on this epistle, and I will only give my opinion of the most distinguished.

Philip Melancthon, on account of his singular learning, industry, and skill in every kind of knowledge, hath cast more light upon this epistle

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than any of his predecessors. But, as his chief intention seems to have been the discussion of such passages as particularly required observation, while he dwells upon these, he designedly omits many things which are calculated to baffle, in some measure, persons of ordinary ability. Melancthon was followed by Bullinger, who hath deservedly obtained great praise, for he has very much distinguished himself by uniting ease with learning. At last, Bucer has completed the whole by publishing his lucubrations on this epistle. For this commentator, as you know, is distinguished by recondite learning, by a copious acquaintance with many subjects, by the perspicuity of his genius, by the extent of his reading, and his many and various other attainments, which give him a decided superiority over the greatest part of his contemporaries, place him on an eminence where few can come in competition with him, and almost none are entitled to carry from him the palm of victory. This expositor is also justly entitled to the peculiar praise of a minuteness and diligence in interpreting Scripture, which give him a superiority over any writer of the present time.

To wish, therefore, to contend with writers of such unrivalled excellence, as it would, I confess, be a proof of too presumptuous an emulation, so it never even entered my mind that I should deprive them of the least portion of their celebrity. Let their favour and authority with the public which all good men acknow-

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ledge they deserve, remain unimpaired. This, I hope, will be granted me, that no production of man ever attained such consummate perfection as not to leave room for the industry of their successors to improve, either by polishing, or adorning, or illustrating. With respect to myself, I dare only declare, that I considered this work might not be wholly without its use; and I have been induced to commence it from no other cause than the good of the church. Besides, I expected, that in consequence of my different manner of writing, I should incur no envy from imitation, which I had the greatest cause to fear. For Melancthon had attained his object by illustrating the most necessary chapters; and he omitted many which ought not to be neglected. While this author was engaged on such subjects as were of the greatest consequence, he could have no desire to prevent others from also examining such parts as merited their attention. Bucer is too prolix to be read hastily by persons who are distracted by other employments, and too sublime to be understood by men in the lower ranks of life, and who are unable to devote their undivided attention to his writings. For whatever subject he handles, the incredible fertility of genius, in which he excels, supplies him with such a fund of matter, that he does not know when to give over writing. Since, however, the former of these commentators has not examined every passage; and the latter, in too diffuse a manner to be read in a short time; my

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plan seemed likely to have no appearance of emulation. I doubted, however, for some time, whether it would be better for me to glean, as it were, a few grapes after the labours of such distinguished men, and of other writers, which I might so collect together, as to be useful to persons of moderate talents ; or to compose an uninterrupted commentary, in which many things would necessarily be repeated that all, or at least some of them, had already mentioned. But since they frequently vary from each other, and thus occasion much difficulty to readers not distinguished for acuteness, and in a state of hesitation concerning the opinion which they ought to adopt, I thought my labour might be useful, if, by pointing out the best interpretation, I relieved those of the trouble of judging, who are not of themselves able to form any certain conclusion, particularly as I intended to treat every subject so concisely, that my readers would not lose much time, while they found in my commentary the sentiments of others. In fine, I did my utmost to prevent any of my readers from having just cause to complain of many needless and superfluous observations in this commentary.

I say nothing of its usefulness, which, however, impartial judges will perhaps, after reading, confess to be greater than I dare modestly promise. It is proper that I excuse myself for occasionally dissenting, or certainly differing a little from others. The word of God ought to be held by us in such venera-

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tion, that it should be distracted as little as possible by a variety of our interpretations. For the Scripture is thus, I know not how, shorn of its majesty, particularly if it is not done with much selection, and with great sobriety. And if it is considered sacrilegious to contaminate any thing dedicated to God, no defence can be made for him who handles with impure, or improperly prepared hands, one of the most sacred of all our earthly blessings. On this account, rashly to turn the Scriptures into various senses, and to wanton with them as in sport, which has frequently, for a good while, been now done by many, is a degree of boldness nearly allied to sacrilege. We ought, however, always to observe, that men distinguished for the zeal of piety, and who handle the mysteries of God with a deep sense of religion and sobriety, have by no means on all occasions agreed among themselves in their interpretations of Scripture. For God never designed so to bless his servants, that each of them was endowed with a full and perfect understanding on every point ; and this was permitted, no doubt, for the purpose of our being preserved, first, in a state of humility ; and, secondly, in the exercise of brotherly love and communion. Since, therefore, we have no cause to expect, in this present life, what otherwise is very much to be desired—to agree constantly with each other in understanding the various passages of Scripture, every effort is to be used that we depart from the opinions of our pre-

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decessors and superiors induced by no passion for novelty—impelled by no desire of reproving others—instigated by no hatred—provoked by no ambition, but compelled by necessity alone, and seeking nothing else than the good of others. We should adopt this plan in explaining Scripture ; and less liberty ought to be taken in the doctrines of religion, in which the Lord is particularly desirous that the minds of his people should harmonize. My readers will easily observe that I have had a regard to both. But since it is not becoming me, either to determine or pronounce any thing concerning myself, I willingly refer to you for a judgment on this work ; and if all men justly submit, for the most part, to your decision, I ought to yield to it in all things ; for the more intimately I am acquainted with you by familiar intercourse, which generally diminishes something of the high opinion we form of others, the more is my value and esteem of you heightened. All men of learning also agree in regarding you with distinguished honour and estimation. Farewell.

STRASBURGH,  
18th October, 1539.

THE ARGUMENT  
OF THE  
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

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I KNOW not whether it is worth my while to dwell at any greater length in praising the utility of this epistle, because I am afraid lest my eulogy of it, which must, without doubt, fall far below its real value and importance, should only contribute to lessen its celebrity. Besides, its character is much more immediately discerned at first sight, and its real nature better explained than can be depicted by any language. I prefer, therefore, to pass on to the argument, which will incontrovertibly prove that this epistle, besides many other excellencies of the highest order, possesses this peculiar property, and unrivalled honour, that the expositor, who has attained to a true understanding of its contents, has the doors thrown open for entering into the deepest and most hidden treasures of the word of truth.

The whole epistle is so methodical that the very preface is distinguished by the artificial character of its structure. This art appears in many passages which will be noticed in our remarks on the epistle, but especially in deriving the principal argument from the preface. For, having commenced with the praise of his apostolic office, Paul gradually advances to commend the gospel; and, since this necessarily leads him to dispute concerning faith, he passes on, conducted as it were by the context, to the consideration of the subject. He thus commences the principal question of the whole epistle, our justification by faith, which he discusses to the end of the fifth chapter. The subject, therefore, proposed for our consideration in these chapters is, that the mercy of God in Christ is the alone righteousness of man, which, being offered

by the gospel, is apprehended by faith. But men are soothed and lulled to sleep by their vices, and so deluded by a false opinion of righteousness as to imagine that they stand in no need of the righteousness of faith, unless they have been cast down from every kind of confidence. Besides, being inebriated by the pleasure of their lusts, and sunk in deep security, they cannot easily be roused to seek for righteousness, unless struck with the terror of the divine judgment. The apostle undertakes to convince them of their iniquity, and to shake them out of their drowsiness when pierced by the arrows of conviction.

Paul, in the commencement, proves the whole human race to be guilty of ingratitude, from the very structure of the world, because they do not, in so great an excellency of his works, acknowledge a Creator; nay, when compelled to own him, they do not honour his majesty as they ought, but profane and violate it by their vanity. Thus all are proved guilty of impiety, which is the most detestable of all crimes. And to show more clearly that all have revolted from the Lord, he enumerates the base and horrid transgressions to which men are every where liable. This affords an evident proof of their degeneracy from God, because they are signs of divine anger which could exist only in the wicked. For the Jews and some of the gentiles, while they covered their internal wickedness by a veil of external holiness, did not by any means think they could be convicted of these crimes, and therefore imagined themselves exempted from a common damnation. The apostle directs his pen against this pretended holiness; and, as he could not strip such characters of their mask in the presence of men, he summons them to the judgment of God, from whose eyes their secret desires are not concealed.

He next divides mankind into Jews and gentiles, and places each of them before God's tribunal. He deprives the gentiles of their pretended excuse from ignorance, because conscience, by which they were more than sufficiently convicted, served them instead of a law. He particularly presses upon the Jews the written law, which they produced in their defence; and having proved them to be transgressors of it, they could not deny their iniquity, since sentence was now pronounced against them by the very mouth of God. At the same time he meets an objection, which might seem to favour them; namely, that injury was done to the covenant of God, if the Jews were not separated from others, which was a mark of holiness to that nation. He on this occasion, for the first

time, teaches that they did not excel others by the right of the covenant, since they had departed from it by their own unfaithfulness. But that he might not derogate in any respect from the constancy of the divine promise, he grants them some prerogative from the covenant, which consisted in God's mercy, not their merit; because it pertains to their own excellence to continue equal to the gentiles. He then confirms it from the authority of Scripture, that the Jews and gentiles are all sinners, where he treats a little concerning the use of the law.

After plainly depriving the human race of all confidence in their own virtue, and boasting in their own righteousness, and affrighting them by the severity of the divine judgment, he now returns to the subject proposed—justification by faith; where he explains the nature of faith, and how we may acquire the righteousness of Christ by its means. He subjoins, to the end of the third chapter, a few striking questions, for the purpose of repelling the ferocity of human pride and boasting, that it may not dare to exalt itself against the grace of God. He prevents the Jews from confining such distinguished grace of God to their own nation, and claims it also for the gentiles.

In the fourth chapter, he draws his argument from an example; proposing the distinguished one of Abraham, liable to no cavils, since, being the father of the faithful, he ought to be regarded as a rule and general pattern. When, therefore, he has proved Abraham to be justified by faith, he teaches us to pursue the same path; and asserts that, by comparing contrary subjects, the righteousness of works vanishes, where a place is allowed to justification by faith. He confirms this by the opinion of David, who places the happiness of man in the mercy of God, and thus deprives works of the character of conferring happiness on man. He then pursues, more at length, what he had briefly alluded to before,—that there was no reason why the Jews should exalt themselves above the gentiles, who have this common happiness equally with the Jews, since the Scripture states that righteousness was conferred on Abraham in uncircumcision. In this passage, he adds something on the use of circumcision. He then subjoins that the promise of salvation depends on the alone goodness of God; for, if it rests upon the law, it will not possess a power of giving peace to the consciences in which it ought to be established, nor will it ever attain perfection. We ought to regard the truth of God alone, and not ourselves, in embracing this promise, if

we wish to make it firm and secure ; and imitate Abraham, who directed all his attention to the power of God, without considering his own case. At the end of the chapter, that he may apply the example adduced more nearly to a universal cause, he institutes a comparison between instances exactly similar.

The fifth chapter, after briefly touching upon the fruit and effect of the righteousness of faith, is almost entirely taken up in amplification, for the purpose of giving a better illustration of the subject. For, deriving his argument from the greater to the less, he shows how much we, who have been already redeemed and reconciled to God, ought to expect from his love, which has been so liberal to abandoned sinners, as to have bestowed upon us his only-begotten and well-beloved Son. He afterwards compares sin with gratuitous righteousness, Christ with Adam, death with life, the law with grace ; whence it is fully established that our evils, however great, are absorbed in the infinite goodness of God.

Paul, in the sixth chapter, descends to sanctification, which we obtain in Christ. For the flesh is liable, as soon as it has enjoyed a slight taste of this grace, peaceably to indulge its vices and lusts, as if it were now dead. But Paul, on the contrary, contends, in this passage, that we cannot perceive righteousness in Christ, unless we apprehend, at the same time, sanctification. He argues from baptism, by which we are initiated into the partaking of Christ, and buried by it in Christ, that, being dead to ourselves, we should by his life be raised to newness of life. It follows, therefore, that none can put on his righteousness without regeneration. He thence exhorts us to purity and holiness, which ought necessarily to exhibit themselves in such as have been translated from a kingdom of sin to a kingdom of righteousness, and have rejected the impious indulgence of the flesh, which seeks for a more unrestrained licentiousness of sinning in Christ. He also inserts a brief mention of the abrogation of the law, which displays the excellence of the New Testament, where the Holy Spirit is promised, with the forgetfulness of our sins.

In the seventh chapter, he enters into an important dispute concerning the use of the law, which he had before pointed at, when he was, as it were, engaged on another subject ; and assigns its inability to do any thing of itself except the causing of our condemnation, as a reason for our being freed from the power of the law. And to prevent this from being perverted to the dishonour of the law, he boldly vindicates it

from all calumny. For he shows the fault to have been ours, why the law, which was given for life, afforded cause for death. At the same time, he explains how sin may be increased by it. He then passes on to describe the struggle between the Spirit and the flesh, which the sons of God feel in themselves as long as they are surrounded with the prison of this mortal body; for they carry about with them the remains of concupiscence, by which they are constantly withdrawn, in some measure, from obeying the law.

The eighth chapter is full of consolation, lest the discouraged consciences of the faithful should become dejected, when they heard of their disobedience, which the apostle had already proved, or rather of their imperfect obedience. But that the impious might not from this cause lull themselves in security, he first testifies that this blessing belongs only to the regenerate, in whom the Spirit of God lives and flourishes. He therefore explains two things; first, that all who are inserted into the Lord Christ by his Spirit, are out of all danger and hazard of damnation, however much they may as yet be laden with sin; and, in the next place, that all those who remain in the flesh, without enjoying the sanctification of the Spirit, are by no means partakers of so great a blessing. He then explains how great the certainty of our own confidence is, when the Spirit of God by his own testimony expels all doubt and trembling. Besides, he at the same time proves, by anticipation, that the security of eternal life cannot be interrupted or disturbed by the present miseries to which we are subject in this mortal state. Nay, our salvation is rather promoted by such exercises, and all our present miseries will be regarded as nothing, when compared with the excellence of salvation in Christ. He confirms this by the example of Jesus, who, as he is the first-born, and holds the pre-eminence in the family of God, so he is the first prototype to whom all ought to be conformed. The apostle, therefore, as if the state of the Christian was secure, joined a very striking and very excellent boasting and glorying, by which he courageously insults over the power and machinations of Satan.

But, since many were deeply concerned when they saw the Jews, the first guardians and heirs of the covenant, abhor Christ, because indeed they hence inferred, either that the covenant was translated from the posterity of Abraham, which despise the perfecting of it, or that the Messiah was not the promised Redeemer, since he had not provided better for the

nation of Israel ; he begins to meet this question from the commencement of the ninth chapter. In the preface, therefore, he speaks of his love to his countrymen, that he may not appear to say any thing from hatred ; and, at the same time, kindly states the ornaments which distinguished the Jewish people ; and, after this, he gently passes on to remove all the offence occasioned by their blindness. He divides the sons of Abraham into two classes, to show that not all who had descended from him, according to the flesh, ought to be reckoned among the seed for the purpose of their being made partakers of the grace of the covenant ; and, on the other hand, that strangers, if ingrafted by faith, are reckoned as sons ; and of this he adduces an example in Esau and Jacob. In this passage, therefore, he again directs our attention to the election of God, on which the whole business must be necessarily thought to depend. Since this election is founded on the alone mercy of God, we seek in vain for its cause in the dignity of man. Rejection is opposed to election, and though the justice of this is undoubted, yet it has no higher cause than the will of God. Towards the end of the chapter, he proves that testimony had been borne both to the calling of the gentiles and the reprobation of the Jews by the predictions of the prophets.

In the tenth chapter he again commences with testifying his love to the Jews, and then states that a vain confidence in works was the cause of their ruin. He, on the other hand, meets an objection which may be adduced from the law, by showing us to be lead by the hand of the law to the righteousness of faith. He adds, that this righteousness is promiscuously offered to all nations by the kindness of God, but is finally apprehended by those whom God has illuminated with his special grace. He states the predictions of Moses and Isaiah to show that more of the gentiles than of the Jews would attain this blessing ; Isaiah openly and expressly prophesied concerning the calling of the gentiles, and Moses of the hardening of the Jews. The question, therefore, still remained, whether there was any difference between the seed of Abraham and other nations, according to God's covenant. While he is desirous to solve this question, he advises them, in the first place, not to limit the work of the Lord to the mere appearance seen by the eyes, since the elect often escape our knowledge ; as Elias was formerly mistaken when he thought that religion had perished among the people of Israel, though seven thousand true worshippers still remained. But lest we should be troubled on account of

the number of unbelievers, who, as we see, hate the gospel, he in the second place asserts that the covenant of the Lord resides also in the carnal posterity of Abraham, but with such as are predestinated by the free election of the Lord. He then directs his remarks to the gentiles, to prevent them from being too fierce and haughty on account of their adoption, when they insult over the rejection of the Jews, although they surpass them in nothing but the favour of the Lord, which ought rather to be to them a subject of humility. Nor had God's favour forsaken the seed of Abraham ; for the Jews are to be provoked, by the faith of the gentiles, to emulate them, so that the Lord will thus gather together all his own Israel.

The three following chapters consist of a great variety of precepts. The twelfth chapter instructs the Christian, by general precepts, how to direct his life and conversation. The thirteenth is chiefly occupied in vindicating the power of the civil magistrate. We are hence entitled to infer with certainty, that there were even then some turbulent spirits, who thought that Christian liberty could not stand firm without disturbing the power of the state. But that Paul might not appear to impose any duties on the church, except those of charity, he proves this obedience also to be contained under love. He afterwards subjoins certain precepts, not yet given, for the regulating of their conduct. In the fourteenth chapter he exhorts them to pursue a line of behaviour particularly necessary in that age. For since there were many who insisted on observing the Mosaic ritual with the most determined superstition, they could not endure any neglect of these ceremonies without taking very serious offence. Such as were confirmed in their abrogation for the purpose of destroying superstition, designedly pretended to entertain a contempt for them. Both offended from a want of moderation. For the superstitious condemned those who were opposed to them, as despisers of the divine law, who, on the other hand, very unseasonably jested at their simplicity. The apostle therefore adopts a plan of moderation suitable to both parties ; for he debars the latter from indulging in pride and haughtiness, and the former from too great peevishness and moroseness. At the same time he prescribes, as the best means for Christian liberty, to confine it within the bounds of love and edification ; and he consults very well for the interest of the weak, while he forbids them to attempt any thing in opposition to the voice of conscience.

The fifteenth chapter begins with the repetition of a general sentiment, as the clause of the whole dispute, that such as

are endowed with more strength should exert their vigour in confirming the weak. But since the ceremonies of Moses sowed constant dissension between the Jews and gentiles, he settles all emulation among them by removing the subject of their pride and boasting. For he teaches both Jews and gentiles that salvation consists in the alone mercy of God ; and it is their duty, relying on this, to lay aside all haughtiness of spirit, and knit together by this grace, in the hope of one inheritance, mutually to embrace each other. Finally, being desirous to pass on to the commendation of his office, as an apostle, which secured no small authority to his doctrine, he embraces this opportunity for making an excuse, and begging pardon, on account of his rashness in taking upon himself, with such confidence, the office of teacher among the Romans. He induces them also to entertain some hopes of his arrival, which in the commencement he had stated that he had hitherto desired and attempted without accomplishing. He adds also the reason which at present prevents him, namely, the care of the alms raised by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia committed to his trust, for relieving the poverty of the saints in Jerusalem. The last chapter is almost entirely taken up in salutations. It is, however, interspersed with some admirable precepts, and closes with an excellent prayer.

COMMENTARY  
ON  
PAUL'S EPISTLE  
TO THE  
ROMANS.

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CHAPTER I.

1 PAUL, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be*  
an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,  
2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in  
the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus  
Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of  
David according to the flesh, 4 And declared *to be*  
the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit  
of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:  
5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship,  
for obedience to the faith among all nations for his  
name; 6 Among whom are ye also the called of  
Jesus Christ: 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of  
God, called *to be* saints: grace to you, and peace,  
from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Paul*—I should be disposed entirely to omit mentioning the name of Paul, because the importance of

the subject does not require us to dwell long upon it, and nothing can be added which has not been repeatedly stated by other interpreters. Since, however, I can easily satisfy one class of my readers without much fatiguing the rest, this question shall be discussed in a few words. Luke himself (Acts xiii. 7, 9) confutes the opinion of those, who suppose the Apostle to have assumed this name as a trophy of the subjugation of the Proconsul Sergius to Christ, for he proves that name to have been given our apostle before that period. Nor do I think it probable he was thus named on his embracing Christianity. I think this conjecture was approved by Augustine merely on account of its affording him an opportunity to pursue a train of shrewd philosophical remarks, in his discourse to show that the proud Saul had become a little disciple of Christ. There is greater probability in the opinion of Origen, who considers him to have had two names. For it is not inconsistent with the appearance of truth to suppose that the family name of Saul had been given him by his parents to mark his religion and kindred, and the surname Paul had been also added as a proof of his right to be a Roman citizen ; because, indeed, they did neither wish this honour, which was highly esteemed at that time, to be concealed in their son, nor did they set so high a value upon it as to cancel the mark of his descent from Israel. Perhaps, too, he therefore used the name of Paul more frequently in his Epistles, because it was more distinguished and common among the churches to which he wrote, more highly valued in the Roman empire, and less known by his relations. For it was his duty not to neglect the avoiding of all unnecessary suspicion, dislike, and hatred, which were then attached to the Jewish name, both at Rome, and in the Provinces ; and to abstain from everything, by which

the rage of his countrymen could be inflamed, or his own personal safety endangered.

*Servant of Jesus*—He distinguished himself by these titles, for the purpose of securing authority to his doctrine. He effects this in two ways; by asserting, in the first place, his call to the office of an apostle, and, in the next, by informing them that it was connected with the Church at Rome. For it was of great importance not only that he should be considered to be an apostle by a call from God, but should be known also to be destined for the Church of Rome. He therefore says he is a servant of Christ, called to the office of an apostle, for the purpose of intimating that he had not rushed into such a situation in a rash manner. He immediately after states that he was *separated*, as a means of giving stronger confirmation to the fact of his not being one of the people, but a distinguished apostle of the Lord. In this sense he had descended from a general term to a species, since an apostleship is a particular kind of ministry. For every one, who sustains the office of teaching, is ranked among Christ's servants; but apostles are much superior to all others in their degree of honour. But the separation, which he afterwards mentions, expresses both the end and use of his apostleship, for he was desirous briefly to point out the design with which he had been called to that function. The title, therefore, of the *servant of Christ*, which he applies to himself, was enjoyed by him in common with all other teachers, but, by claiming that of an apostle, he prefers himself to others; since, however, a person who of his own accord thrusts himself into an office is entitled to no authority, he admonishes us that he is appointed of God. The following, therefore, is the sense of the passage:—"I, Paul, am not any ordinary minister of Christ, but an apostle, con-

stituted such by the calling of God, not by any rash effort of my own." Then follows a more clear explanation of his apostolic office, by which he was appointed to preach the gospel; for I do not agree with those who refer the calling mentioned by the apostle to the eternal election of God, understanding by it either his separation from his mother's womb, stated by himself in Galatians (chap. i. 15), or his destination to preach to the Gentiles, related by Luke. For he simply glories in his having God as the author of his office, that no one may think he assumes this honour to himself of his own private rashness and presumption. It must here be observed, that all are not fit for the ministry of the word, which requires a special calling; nay, it is the duty of those who consider themselves as possessing the best qualifications, to take care lest they hurry into it without a call. We shall consider, in another place, what the calling of apostles and bishops mean, observing, particularly, that preaching the gospel is the office of an apostle. This evidently shows the folly of those "dumb dogs" who are distinguished for nothing else but a mitre, a crozier, and such-like mummeries, while they yet boast of themselves as the successors of the apostles. The name of *servant* signifies nothing more than a minister, for it relates to an office. I mention this to remove the vain fancy of such as, without any reason, indulge in philosophical observations upon the word "servant," while they imagine the bondage of Moses to be opposed to that of Christ.

*Which he had before promised*—Paul establishes the faith of the gospel by its antiquity, because the force of a doctrine is much diminished by novelty, as if he had said that Christ had not dropped down suddenly upon the earth, or introduced a new kind of doctrine never heard of before, since he himself, together

with his gospel, had been *promised*, and always expected from the beginning of the world. In the next place, because antiquity is often fabulous, he adds, "Witnesses, and those likewise of a classical character, namely, the *prophets* of God, with a view to remove all suspicion." In addition to this, he states, in the third place, that their testimony is supported by proper signature, even by the *holy Scriptures*. We may hence infer what the gospel is, since we are taught that it was not preached or promulgated, but only "promised" by the prophets. If the prophets, therefore, promised the gospel, the consequence is, that it was exhibited when the Lord was finally manifested in the flesh. All who confound the promises with the gospel are evidently deceived, since the gospel is properly the solemn preaching of the manifestation of Christ, in whom the promises themselves are exhibited.

*Concerning his Son*—A remarkable passage, which teaches us the whole gospel is contained in Christ, so that every one, who removes a single foot from Christ, withdraws himself from the gospel. For since he is the living and express image of the Father, we need not be astonished that he alone is proposed to us as the object to whom all our faith is directed, and in whom it consists. This, therefore, is a certain description of the gospel, by which Paul intimates what it summarily comprehends. I have translated the following words, *Jesus Christ*, in the same case with *his Son*, because I consider it to agree better with the context. We must hence draw the following conclusion, that every person, who makes a proper advancement in the knowledge of Christ, acquires an acquaintance with the whole scope of the gospel, while, on the contrary, all such as desire to obtain wisdom out of Christ, act the part not only of fools, but of madmen.

*Who was made*—It is our duty to seek for two things in Christ, if we are desirous to find salvation in him, divinity and humanity. The divinity contains power, righteousness, and life, in itself, which are communicated to us by the humanity; wherefore the apostle hath expressly mentioned both in the sum of the gospel, because Christ has been exhibited in the flesh, and declared himself to be the Son of God in it; as John also (John i. 14,) after he had said that the Word was made flesh, adds, “he was the glory as of the only begotten Son of God” in the flesh itself. The special notice which he takes of the family and origin of Christ, from his ancestor David, is not without its use; for this particular sentence directs our attention to the promise, and removes all doubt of his being the very person who was formerly promised. The promise made to David had acquired so great celebrity as to leave no doubt of its being a commonly received opinion among the Jews that the Messiah was called the Son of David. The position, therefore, that Christ was descended from David, contributes to the certainty of our faith. He adds, *according to the flesh*, for the purpose of convincing us that he possessed something superior to the flesh which he had brought down from heaven, and had not received from David, namely, the glory of the Deity, which is afterwards mentioned. Moreover, by these expressions, Paul not only declares the true essence of flesh in Christ, but manifestly distinguishes between his divine and human nature, thus refuting the impious dotage of Servetus, who imagined Christ’s flesh was compounded of three uncreated elements.

*Declared the Son of God*—Or *determined*, if such a translation meets your approbation: as if he had said, The virtue of the resurrection resembles the decree by which he was pronounced the Son of God,

as in Psalm ii. 7, "This day have I begotten you," for that begetting is referred to knowledge. Although some make this passage to comprehend three separate proofs of the divinity of Christ, understanding, first, by virtue, miracles; secondly, the testimony of the Spirit; and, lastly, the resurrection of the dead: I prefer joining them together, and refer all these three to one, in the following manner: Christ was determineed to be the Son of God, by openly exerting his truly heavenly power, which was also that of the Spirit, when he rose from the dead. This power is understood when it is sealed to the hearts of believers by the same Spirit.) The expression of the apostle supports this interpretation, for he says Christ had been declared by *power*, because, indeed, the power peculiar to God had shone forth in him, and afforded an undoubted proof of his divinity. This also displays itself in his resurrection, as in another passage, (2 Cor. xiii. 4,) the same Paul, while he confesses that the weakness of the flesh had appeared in Christ's death, commends the power of the Spirit in the resurrection. This glory, however, is not made known to us, until the same Spirit seals it to our hearts. We can have no doubt that Paul includes also the evidence experienced by individuals in their own hearts, with the admirable power of the Spirit which Christ manifested by rising from the dead; because he expressly mentions sanctification, as if the apostle had said, the Spirit, by sanctifying individual believers, ratifies and confirms that proof of its power which it once displayed. For the Scripture often applies epithets to the Spirit of God, adapted to the present subject. Thus he is denominated by our Lord (John xiv. 7) "the Spirit of truth," from the effect stated in that passage. Moreover, divine power is, therefore, said to have shone forth in the resurrection of Christ;

because he rose, as he has frequently testified, by his own power ; “destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;” (John ii. 9;) “no one taketh away my life from me.” (John x. 18.) For he obtained a victory over death, to which he had yielded according to the weakness of his flesh, not by any precarious assistance, but by the heavenly operation of his own Spirit.

*By whom we have received*—After finishing his description of the gospel, which he inserted as commendatory of his office, he now returns to assert his calling, to which he observed a strong testimony had been afforded the Romans. Grace and apostleship are separated by the figure Hypallage, and mean either apostleship freely bestowed, or the grace of the apostleship ; he thus intimates that his appointment to such a rank had been wholly the work of divine beneficence, not of his own dignity. For though in the presence of the world, his office is accompanied with almost nothing but dangers, labours, hatred, and infamy ; yet, with God and his saints, it is considered one of no vulgar and ordinary dignity, and, therefore, justly esteemed to be of grace. The following interpretation, if the reader prefers it, conveys the same sense : “I have received grace to be an apostle.” The expression, *in the name*, is explained by Ambrose, of his appointment to preach the gospel instead of Christ, according to the following passage :—“We are ambassadors for Christ.” (2 Cor. v. 20.) The opinion of those, however, who consider name to mean knowledge, appears to be more sound, because the gospel is preached for this very purpose, (1 John iii. 23,) that we may “believe in the Son of God.” And Paul himself is called an elect vessel, to carry the name of Christ among the Gentiles. (Acts ix. 15.) The expression, therefore, for the name conveys the same

sense as if Paul had said "that I may manifest the character of Christ."

*To the obedience of faith*—That is, we have received the commandment to carry the gospel to all the Gentiles, with a view to their obeying it by faith. He, in turn, admonishes the Romans of their duty from the design of his calling, as if he had said, "My part indeed is to perform the office entrusted to me, namely, the preaching of the word ; it is yours to listen to the word with all obedience, unless you wish to make the calling which I have received from the Lord to be of none effect." Whence we infer, that the command of God is obstinately resisted, and his whole order perverted, by those who reject, in an irreverent and contemptuous manner, the preaching of the gospel, for its very design is to compel us to obey God. The nature of faith deserves our notice on this occasion, which is, therefore, distinguished by the name of obedience, because the Lord calls us by the gospel, and we answer him by faith, when he calls us ; as, on the contrary, unbelief is the source of all our stubbornness against God. I prefer the translation into the *obedience of faith*, rather than *for obedience*, since the last interpretation can only be applied improperly and figuratively, although it is once used, (Acts vi. 7;) for faith is, properly, that by which the gospel is obeyed.

*Among all nations ; among whom, &c.*—It was not sufficient for him to receive the appointment of an apostle, unless his ministry had respect to the disciples ; and on this account he adds, that his apostleship extends to all nations. Afterwards he more plainly calls himself an apostle of the Romans, when he says, that they also were comprehended in the number of the nations, to whom a minister was given. Moreover, the apostles receive a common

command concerning the preaching of the gospel through the whole world, for they are not appointed as shepherds and bishops over certain churches. But Paul, beside the general province of the apostolic function, was appointed, by special authority, a minister for preaching the gospel among the nations. The circumstance of his being prevented to pass by Macedonia, and to speak the word in Mysia, (Acts xvi. 6,) is not opposed to this statement, as if limits were thus fixed to the extent of his boundaries, because it was necessary for him to go at that time to another place, and the harvest there was not yet fully ripe.

*The called of Jesus Christ*—He assigns a reason, which applies more immediately to themselves, because, indeed, the Lord had now afforded in them a proof, by which he declared that they were called to the communication of the gospel. Whence it followed, if they were desirous of the continuance of their own calling, that they ought not to reject the ministry of Paul, who had been appointed by the same election of the Lord. The sentence, “called of Jesus Christ,” I therefore consider to be declaratory, as if the word *namely* had intervened, and it means they are partakers of Jesus Christ by his calling. For they are not only chosen in Christ by their heavenly Father among his sons, who are to be the heirs of an everlasting life, but, after their election, are committed also to his care and faithful protection as their shepherd.

*To all that are at Rome*—He shows, in a beautiful order, what deserves to be praised in us. First, that the Lord, in his kindness, has taken us into his favour and love; secondly, has called us; thirdly, has called us to holiness, which praise is finally enjoyed by us, if we do not neglect our calling. A very faithful doctrine is here suggested for our

consideration, and I leave it, after making this short allusion, to the meditation of each of my readers. Certainly the praise of our salvation does not, according to St. Paul, depend upon our own power, but is derived entirely from the fountain of God's gratuitous and paternal love towards us; for Paul makes this to be the beginning of God's love to us. What other cause but his own mere goodness can moreover be assigned for his love? On this also depends his calling, by which, in his own time, he seals the adoption in those who were first gratuitously chosen by him. From these premises the conclusion follows, that none truly associate themselves with the faithful who do not place a certain confidence in the Lord's kindness to them, although undeserving and wretched sinners; and being roused by his goodness, they aspire to holiness, "For he hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness." (1 Thess. iv. 6.) Since the Greek admits of being translated in the second person, I see no cause for changing it.

*Grace and peace*—There is nothing, in the first place, deserves more to be desired by us than to have God propitious, which is the meaning of grace. In the second place, the prosperity and success of all our affairs proceed and flow from him, which is the sense of the word "peace;" for, though every thing may appear to smile upon us, if God is angry, our very blessing is changed into a curse. The only foundation, therefore, of our happiness is the kindness of God, which is the source of our enjoying true and solid prosperity, while our very adversity itself promotes our salvation. We understand, also, by our supplicating peace from the Lord, that every blessing we enjoy is the fruit of divine beneficence. Nor ought we to omit mentioning, that he at the same time prays for the attain-

ment of those blessings from the Lord Jesus. For our Lord deserves to be treated with this honour, who is not only the servant and dispenser of our Father's kindness to us, but works all things in common with him. The proper meaning, however, of the apostle is, that all the blessings of God come to us by Christ. Some consider we ought rather to understand by the word "peace," tranquillity of conscience; and, I grant, it sometimes admits this construction; but since the apostle was undoubtedly desirous to allude here to the sum of all blessings, the first interpretation, proposed by Bucer, suits the passage much better. The apostle, therefore, feeling a desire to pray that the sum of all happiness should be conferred on the pious, has immediate recourse, as on a former occasion, to the fountain itself, namely, the grace of God, which not only is the source of our eternal happiness, but the cause of all blessings in this life.

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; 10 Making request (if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God) to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; 12 That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

*First, I thank*—Here he commences in a manner very suitable to the cause, since, from reasons derived

both from his own character and that of the Romans, he seasonably prepares them to submit to his instructions. When the apostle mentions the renown of their faith, an argument is drawn from their own character, for he intimates that they were obligated, by the public commendation of the churches, not to reject the apostle of the Lord, unless they wished to disappoint the opinion which all men entertained of them. Such conduct is considered to be inconsistent with good manners, and in some measure to resemble a breach of faith. As this testimony, therefore, ought with very good reason to induce the apostle, who had conceived a confident opinion of their obedience, to undertake, according to his office, to teach and instruct the Romans, so they were obligated in turn not to despise his authority. He disposes them, from a consideration of his own character, to submit to his instructions by testifying his sincere love to them. And nothing has a more powerful effect to secure confidence in a counsellor, than the opinion of his studying and contriving for our interest from sincere affection. In the first place, it is worthy of remark, that he so praises their faith as to refer it to God, by which we are taught faith to be the gift of God. For if thanksgiving is the acknowledgment of a kindness, whoever thanks God for faith confesses it to be his gift. And when we find the apostle always commences his rejoicings with thanksgiving, we may learn this instruction from it, that all our blessings are kindnesses from God. We ought also to habituate ourselves to such forms of expression, as may rouse us with greater eagerness to acknowledge God to be the giver of all blessings, and to excite others at the same time to a similar train of thoughts. If it is right to observe this in blessings of small importance, we ought to do it much more with respect

to faith, which is neither an ordinary nor a common gift of God. Besides, we have here an example how thanks ought to be given through Christ, according to the precept of the apostle, (Heb. xiii. 15,) showing how we both seek and obtain mercy from the Father in his name. Finally, he mentions his own God, which is a special privilege of the faithful, on whom alone God confers this honour. For there is a mutual relation expressed in the promise, (Jer. xxx. 22,) "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Though I prefer restricting it to the character which Paul supported, as an approval of the obedience paid by him to the Lord in the preaching of the gospel. Thus Hezekiah calls God the God of Isaiah, when he wishes to give him the character of a true and faithful prophet. (Isaiah xxxvii. 4.) He is called, by way of excellence, the God of Daniel, because he vindicated the purity of the worship of the Most High. (Dan. vi. 19.)

*By the whole world*—The commendation of good men was regarded by Paul as that of the whole world, in estimating the faith of the Romans. For unbelievers, who rather execrated this faith, could not give a sincere or probable testimony concerning it. We must, therefore, understand that the faith of the Romans was proclaimed in the whole world, by the voice of all believers who could form a proper opinion and give a just decision on this point. It was of no importance to find this small and ignoble band of men wholly unknown to the wicked at Rome, since their judgment had not the smallest weight with Paul.

*For God is my witness*—He shows his love from its effects, for had he not been warmly attached to them, he would not have commended, with so much earnestness, their salvation to the Lord, nor would he have especially desired to promote the same with so

much ardour by his own exertion. The solicitude and the desire of the apostle are undoubted proofs of his attachment, for they can never exist unless they arise from love. But since he knew it to be of importance to convince the Romans of his sincerity, if he wished to establish their confidence in his preaching, he confirms it by an oath, a necessary method for giving certainty to our discourse, when we consider it worth our while to confirm and settle upon a sure foundation whatever is liable to doubt. For if an oath is merely an appeal to God for confirming our discourse, every one must grant the wisdom of the apostle's oath, which he took without infringing the precept of Christ. Hence it is evident that the design of Christ was not as the too superstitious Anabaptists dream, entirely to abolish oaths, but rather to restore the true observance of the law. For the law, while it allows an oath, condemns only perjury, and unnecessary swearing. If, therefore, we wish to swear properly, we should imitate the gravity and devotion which appear in the apostles in taking oaths. To understand this form of an oath fully, we must consider, that while we appeal to God as a witness, he is summoned also, as a punisher of our sin, if we swear deceitfully, which Paul, on another occasion, expresses in the following words, "I call God for a record upon my soul." (2 Cor. i. 23.)

*Whom I serve with my spirit*—For as profane men, who make a mock of God, are accustomed to appeal to his name as a mere pretext, with equal assurance and rashness, Paul commends his piety in this place with a view to secure for himself the confidence of the Romans. For such persons, as are under the influence of a lively fear and reverential awe of God, will tremble to take a false oath. Paul also opposes his spirit to a mere external mask; for as many falsely pretend to be worshippers of God,

who are such only in appearance, he bears witness that he worships from the heart. Perhaps, also, he had regard to the ancient ceremonies by which alone the Jews appreciated the worship of God. He means, therefore, that although not exercised in ceremonial observances, he is nevertheless a sincere worshipper of God, as in Phil. iii. 3, "We are the true circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh." He boasts, therefore, of his worshipping God with sincere piety of the heart, which is true religion and right worship. It was also of importance, as we have already mentioned, with a view to confirm the certainty of his oath, that Paul should testify his piety towards God. For impious persons make a mock at perjury, which pious characters dread more awfully than a thousand deaths. For wherever there is a serious fear of God, the same reverence of his name must exist. It amounts to the same thing as if Paul had said, that he was well acquainted with the sanctity and religion required in taking an oath, while he did not, after the example of profane persons, call God to witness in a rash manner. And his conduct teaches us to entertain such a deep sense of piety, whenever we take an oath, that the name of Christ, which we express with our lips, may have its own power on our hearts. He then proves from a sign, namely, his ministry, in what manner his worship of God does not arise from mere pretence. For by his ministry he exhibits the most full proof that he was devoted to the glory of God, who denied himself, and did not hesitate to undergo all the difficulties of ignominy, of poverty, of death, and hatred, for exalting the kingdom of God. Some explain the sentence, as if Paul wished to recommend the worship with which he honoured God, because it is agreeable to the command of the gospel, where a

spiritual worship is certainly prescribed. But the former interpretation, namely, his obedience of God manifested by his preaching the word, corresponds much better with the context. He, however, distinguishes himself in the mean time from hypocrites, who are influenced by another motive than the worshipping of God, since most of them are impelled by ambition, or something of a similar nature, and there is no cause to consider them all as discharging their ministerial duty from the heart, and with fidelity. The sum is, that St. Paul devotes himself with sincerity to the duty of teaching, because the circumstance of his piety, which he has mentioned, makes it correspond with the present subject. Hence we deduce a useful doctrine, calculated to supply the ministers of the truth with no small courage, when informed that by preaching the gospel they perform a worship grateful and precious to God himself. For what should prevent them from preaching, when they know their labours to be so pleasing to God and approved by him, as to be considered a distinguished part of worship? He also denominates it the gospel of the Son of God, by which Christ becomes eminent, being pointed out in this instance by the Father, that while the Son is glorified, he in turn glorifies the Father.

*How unceasingly*—He continues to manifest the increasing force of his love by the constancy of his prayer. For it was a striking instance of his affection to find the apostle make mention of the Romans in all the prayers he poured forth to the Lord. The sense of the passage becomes clearer if the adverb *always* is understood to mean in *all* my prayers, as often as I address God in my supplications, I add also the mention of you Romans. He speaks not of any invocation of God, but of prayers, to which the saints voluntarily devote themselves,

having laid aside all other cares. For the apostle might often have a sudden ejaculation, without remembering the Romans; but whenever with an express intention, and deep meditation, he prayed to God, his attention was directed to the Romans among others. He, therefore, particularly speaks of *prayers*, to which saints devote themselves with determined purpose, as we see the Lord himself seeking a place of retirement for such an object. The frequency, or rather the continuance of his habit of praying, is intimated by his saying, that he devoted himself to prayer *without ceasing*.

*Making request, if by any means*—Because it is not probable we shall, from our heart, study to promote the welfare of that person whom we are not prepared to assist by our labour, he now adds, that he is ready to testify, in the presence of God, his love by another argument, namely, by requesting to be of use to them. The full sense of the passage will appear by supplying *also*, and reading as follows: “*Making also request, if by any means I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God;*” and he thus declared, that he not only expects prosperity in his journey by the grace of God, but he makes the success of his journey to depend on the encouragement and approbation of the Lord. All our wishes ought to be ordered according to this rule.

*For I long to see you*—He could, although absent, confirm their faith by his doctrine; but a plan is always best formed when people are present; he was, therefore, desirous to see them. He explains, also, his design in undertaking the trouble of such a journey to have been, not his own, but their advantage. By *spiritual gifts*, he means the powers he possessed either of teaching, or of exhortation, or of prophecy, which he knew he had acquired from the

grace of God. He hath well marked the lawful use of these gifts by the word *impart*; for different gifts are, therefore, peculiarly conferred upon each, that all may kindly contribute to mutual welfare, and convey to one another the powers which each individually possesses. (Rom. xii. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 11.)

*To the end you may be established*—He modifies his remarks on communication, lest he should appear to consider them as not yet properly initiated into Christ, and as characters who had not yet learned the first elements of the gospel. He says, therefore, that he was chiefly desirous to afford them his assistance on that point, where such as have made the greatest progress still require aid; for we all want to be strengthened, until we have attained the “measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. iv. 13.) And not satisfied with this proof of his modesty, he corrects his remark by showing that he does not usurp the office of teacher without a desire to receive mutual instruction from them; as if he had said, I am desirous to confirm you according to the measure of grace conferred upon myself, that I may receive from your example a new accession to the alacrity of my faith, by which we may mutually profit each other. See how great moderation appears to reside in his pious breast, since he does not refuse to seek confirmation from ignorant learners. Nor does he state this merely in a dissembling manner, for there is none, however weak, in the church of Christ, who cannot be of some use for our advance in grace, but malignity and pride prevent us from deriving such fruit by mutual and reciprocal instructions. Such is the nature of our pride, such the inebriating effect of our foolish boasting, that each of us, while he despises and bids adieu to others, considers he has a sufficient abundance in himself. I translate the Greek word,

with Bucer, *exhortation*, rather than consolation, since it agrees better with the context.

13 Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. 14 I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise. 15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

*Now I would not have you ignorant*—He now confirms the testimony he had given of his constant supplication to God to allow him on some occasion to visit them, since it might have appeared a vain profession if he had neglected to embrace the opportunities which presented themselves. For he says the power was wanting, not the endeavour, having frequently been prevented from his intended purpose of visiting the churches at Rome. We hence learn that the Lord frequently overthrows the plans of his saints with a view to humble them, and, by such a state of humiliation, to keep their minds constantly exercised in looking to his providence, on which they are thus taught to depend, although their plans, in a proper sense, are not frustrated, because they enter into no deliberations without the will of God. For it is the daring attempt of impiety to determine on future plans without consulting God, as if they could be regulated by our power, which conduct St. James (chap. iv. 13) severely reproves. Paul means, when he says he had been hitherto hindered, that the Lord imposed upon him the transaction of more urgent business, which he could not omit without injury to the church. The impediments of

believers and unbelievers differ, for the latter feel themselves hindered when they are unable to move from the violent hand of the Lord, and the former are satisfied to be prevented by some lawful reason, and allow themselves to attempt nothing either besides their duty, or contrary to edification.

*That I might have some fruit*—He speaks of the fruit, which the apostles were sent by the Lord to collect : “ I have chosen you, that you may go and bring forth fruit, and your fruit may remain.” (John xv. 10.) He calls the fruit his own, which he collected for the Lord, not himself, because nothing is more the property of the pious than any event which promotes the glory of God, with which all their happiness is united. He states also, that this had befallen him among other nations, for the purpose of inspiring the Romans with a hope of his arrival not being useless, which had been attended with advantage among so many of the Gentiles.

*To the Greeks and Barbarians, the wise, &c.*—The epithets *wise* and *unwise*, explain the meaning of Greek and Barbarian, and I retain the words of the apostle, without blaming Erasmus, who translates them *learned* and *ignorant*. Paul draws an argument, therefore, from his office, to show that he must not be blamed for arrogance, because he hoped to be of some use in teaching the Romans, however much they excelled both in learning and prudence and skill, since God had determined to make him debtor also to the wise. Two things are here to be considered, first, that a heavenly command has destined and offered the gospel to the wise, by which the Lord may subject all the wisdom and all the ingenuity of the world to himself, and make every kind of science, and the sublimity of all the arts, yield to the simplicity of his doctrine ; especially, because the learned are reduced into disci-

pline with the ignorant, and become so tame as to endure those characters to be schoolfellows under Christ their Master, whom they would not before have deigned to receive as scholars. In the second place, the ignorant ought not by any means to be debarred from this school, or the learned to avoid it with a vain fear; for if Paul was a debtor to the poor, and is to be considered in debt to the very best faith, he truly paid what he owed. They will, therefore, in this instance, find what they shall be capable of enjoying. All teachers have here a rule to follow, namely, to order themselves, in a modest and kind manner, to the ignorant and illiterate. By such a plan they will quietly endure much absurd conduct, and patiently bear with innumerable instances of pride, by which they might, without such a lesson, have been overcome. It is, however, their duty to remember that they are laid under such obligations to the foolish, as not by immoderate indulgence to cherish their folly.

*So, as much as in me is*—He concludes what he had hitherto said of his own desire to go to Rome; and since it seemed to be a part of his duty to spread the gospel among them, with a view to collect fruit to the Lord, he manifests his earnest wish to satisfy the call of God, as far as he was permitted by the Lord.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

*I am not ashamed*—He here prevents and answers

an objection by stating, that he pays no regard to the scorn of the wicked; and, in passing, he embraces this opportunity for commanding the dignity of the gospel, that it might not be despised by the Romans. He hints, indeed, that the gospel is despised by the world, when he says he is not ashamed of it himself; and he thus prepares the Romans to bear the dishonour of the cross of Christ, that they might not undervalue the gospel, which they saw exposed to the scoffs and taunts of the wicked, while he proves against its opponents how highly it was valued by believers. The power of God, in the first place, if it deserves to be magnified, shines forth in the gospel. If goodness is worthy of being desired and loved, the gospel is the instrument of that goodness; and it ought to be deservedly honoured and esteemed, since veneration is due to the power of God; and we ought to love it in proportion as our salvation is thus secured. Observe, also, how much Paul attributes to the ministry of the word, when he testifies that God in the gospel exerts his power for saving us by its means; for he is not speaking here of any secret revelation, but preaching by the voice. Hence it follows that the power of God is designedly rejected, and his liberating hand removed at a great distance by those who withdraw themselves from hearing the word preached. But because he does not work with efficacy in all, but only where the Spirit shines in our hearts as an internal teacher, he therefore subjoins the sentence, *to every one that believeth.* The gospel is, indeed, offered to all for salvation, but its power does not every where appear. And that it is the savour of death to unbelievers, arises not so much from the nature of the gospel, as from their own wickedness. By showing one way of salvation, it cuts off all other confidence; and, by withdrawing themselves

from this only salvation, the gospel gives them a certain proof of their own ruin. When, therefore, the gospel invites all indifferently to salvation, it is properly termed the doctrine of salvation. For Christ is there offered, and his proper office is to save that which had perished; and such as refuse to be saved by him, experience him in the character of their Judge. The word *salvation* is every where in Scripture opposed simply to death; and when it occurs, we must consider the subject treated of; for when the gospel frees from the ruin and curse of eternal death, the salvation secured by it is everlasting life.

*To the Jew first and Greek*—Under the name *Greek*, he here comprehends all Gentiles, as the comparison proves, since he was desirous to include all mankind under these two classes. It is probable Paul had chiefly chosen the Greek nation, from whom he denominated *all Gentiles*, because they were the first after the Jews who were made partakers of the gospel covenant; and the Jews were better acquainted with the Greeks on account of their vicinity, and the great celebrity of their language. The whole, therefore, of the Gentiles is meant by one part of these, the Greeks; and he thus in general unites Jews and Gentiles in the participation of the gospel, without depriving the Jews of their degree and rank, since they were the first in promise and calling. The apostle, therefore, secures their prerogative for the Jews, but immediately joins the Gentiles, although as partakers of the same blessing in an inferior degree.

*For the righteousness of God unto salvation*—This is an explanation and confirmation of the former sentence, “that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.” For if we seek salvation, or life with God, we must first seek righteousness, by which,

being reconciled to him, we may obtain, by his being propitious to us, that life which consists in his benevolence alone. For we must, first, be necessarily righteous, that we may be loved of God, for he hates unrighteousness. The meaning, therefore, is, that we can obtain salvation by no other method than the gospel, since God has nowhere else revealed his righteousness to us, which alone frees us from death. And this *righteousness*, the foundation of salvation, is revealed in the gospel, whence the gospel is called “the power of God unto salvation.” In this way we reason from cause to effect. Again, observe how rare and precious a treasure God confers upon us in his gospel, namely, “the communication of his righteousness.” I understand that to be *the righteousness of God*, which is approved at his tribunal; as, on the other hand, that is generally called *the righteousness of man*, which, in the opinion of our fellow-beings, is reckoned and esteemed righteousness, though it be only smoke. Yet I doubt not but Paul alludes to many prophecies, where the Spirit every where celebrates the righteousness of God in the future kingdom of Christ. Some explain it to mean, “what is given us of God.” And I, indeed, acknowledge the words admit this sense, because God justifies us by his gospel, therefore he saves us. The former sense appears to me more suitable to the context, though I do not much dispute concerning this subject. It is of more importance that some consider this *righteousness* to consist not only in the gratuitous remission of sins, but partly also in the grace of regeneration. But, I think, we are therefore restored to life, because God reconciles us to himself gratuitously, as we will afterwards treat more fully in its proper place. Moreover, he now uses the expression, *by faith*, who before said *to every believer*. For righteousness is

offered by the gospel, and perceived by faith. He subjoins *to faith*, because, in proportion to the advancement of our faith, and to our progress in this knowledge, *the righteousness of God* increases in us, and its possession is, in some measure, confirmed and ratified. When we first taste the gospel, we behold, indeed, the countenance of God joyful, and stretched forth towards us, but at a distance; the more our knowledge of piety increases, we behold the grace of God, as if he was making nearer approaches to us with greater clearness, and in a more familiar manner. The opinion of those, who think the Old and New Testament to be here secretly compared, is more acute than solid. For Paul does not, in this passage, compare the fathers, who lived under the law with us, but he marks the daily progress of each believer.

*As it is written*—He proves the righteousness of faith by the authority of the Prophet Habakkuk; for when he prophesies concerning the destruction of the proud, he at the same time adds, *the life of the righteous consists in faith*. But we do not live in the presence of God except by righteousness; whence it follows, that our righteousness is also placed in faith. The future verb points out the solid perpetuity of the life mentioned by him; as if he had said, “it shall not continue for a moment, but endure for ever.” For the wicked also are puffed up with a false opinion of life, “but when they say, peace and security, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” (1 Thess. v. 3.) Theirs is a shadow, which endures only for a moment, while the faith of the righteous alone brings everlasting life. Whence does this arise, but from faith leading us to God, and placing our life in him? For Paul would not have quoted this passage in an appropriate manner, unless the prophet meant, that we then stand fast,

when we rest on God by faith. And he has not, indeed, ascribed the life of the pious to faith, unless so far as they gather themselves together, under the protection of their own God, while they condemn the pride of the world. The prophet does not, indeed, professedly treat of this subject, and hence he makes no mention of gratuitous righteousness ; but it is sufficiently evident, from the nature of faith, that this passage suits the present subject. From this method of reasoning, we also necessarily infer the mutual relation of faith and the gospel, for because the just is said to be about to *live by faith*, it follows that such a life is perceived by the gospel. We have now the principal point or hinge of the first part of this epistle, that we are *justified by faith* through the alone mercy of God. We have not this expressly stated in as many words by Paul, but it evidently appears afterwards from the context, that the righteousness, which is founded on faith, wholly depends on the mercy of God.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them : for God hath showed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse : 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves wise, they

became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

*Is revealed*—He now proves, by comparing contrary arguments, that righteousness is bestowed or conferred only by the gospel, for he shows all to be condemned who do not enjoy its blessings. Salvation, therefore, can be found in it alone. The first proof of condemnation, adduced by the apostle, is the structure of the world, and this most beautiful composition of the elements, which, though well calculated to excite them to glorify God, have never induced any one to discharge his duty to so kind a Creator. This proves all men to be guilty of sacrilege, and of impious and wicked ingratitude. Some consider the first proposition to be stated here, so that Paul derives his discourse from the subject of repentance, but I think this the commencement of the controversy; and the statement of the subject had been already made in the preceding proposition, for the plan of Paul is to teach where salvation is to be sought, and he hath declared, that we can attain it by no other means than by the gospel. But, because the flesh does not voluntarily humble itself so far as to ascribe the praise of salvation to the alone grace of God, Paul makes the whole world guilty of eternal death. Hence it follows that we must recover life by some other means, since we are all ruined in ourselves. But a careful examination of each word will afford us much assistance in understanding the whole sentence. Some commentators confine “ungodliness” to a violation of the worship of God, and “unrighteousness” to a want of justice to man. But, because the apostle refers unrighteousness im-

mediately to the neglect of religion, we shall interpret both in the same sense.

*All ungodliness of men*—By transposing the order of construction, it means, that *all men* stand convicted of impiety. And ingratitude to God is pointed out by two different expressions, because we offend against our heavenly Father in two different ways. *Ungodliness* implies, as it were, a dishonouring of God; *unrighteousness* means, that man, by transferring to himself those perfections which belong to the supreme Being, unjustly deprived God of his due honour. *The anger of God* means his vengeance, by applying, as is usual in Scripture, the passions of man to God; because God, when he punishes, assumes, in our opinion, an angry countenance. It implies, therefore, no emotion in God, but has reference only to the judgment and feeling of the sinner, who is punished. *Revealed from heaven*, is applied by some as an epithet, and means “the God of heaven;” but, in my opinion, there is more force in the following sense: Let man look where he will, he can find no hopes of salvation, *for the wrath of God* is poured out upon the whole world, even as far as the heavens extend. *The truth of God* means, the true knowledge of God. *To hold the truth* is to suppress, or obscure it, and hence they are, as it were, accused of theft. *In unrighteousness*, is a Hebrew phrase, and means, as we have translated it, “unrighteously,” which makes the passage more perspicuous.

*Because that which may be known of God*—He thus denominates what is right or expedient for us to *know of God*; and he understands the whole of what pertains to the manifesting of the glory of God; or, which amounts to the same, whatever ought to induce and excite us to glorify God. This means, that the full extent of God’s character can on no

account be comprehended by our limited mind; but there are certain bounds within which men ought to confine themselves, as God adapts every testimony he makes of himself to our standard. All such, therefore, doat and desire to know what the nature of God is: for the Spirit, the teacher of perfect wisdom, recalls us, not without reason, to what may be known; and the apostle will afterwards add how that knowledge may be obtained. The force of the passage is increased by the preposition *in*, for though in Hebrew phraseology, which the apostle frequently uses, the particle *in* is often redundant, yet he seems here desirous to indicate such a manifestation of the divine character, as is too forcible to allow men to escape from its power, since every one of us undoubtedly feels it engraven upon his heart. The passage, *for God hath showed it unto them*, may thus be explained,—that man was formed to be a spectator of the fabric of the world; that he was endowed with eyes for the purpose of his being carried to God himself, the author of the world, by steadily beholding so beautiful an image.

*For the invisible things of him*—God is invisible of himself, but since his majesty shines forth in all his works and in all his creatures, men ought to acknowledge him, for these evidently declare their maker. In this sense the Apostle to the Hebrews calls the worlds mirrors, or spectacles of invisible things. Paul does not recount severally all the attributes of the Deity, but he informs us that we have come to his *eternal power and godhead*; for the Author of all things must necessarily be without beginning, and self-created. On discovering these attributes the divinity manifests itself, which cannot exist but with the individual attributes of God, since all are comprehended under the same Deity.

*So that they are without excuse*—This clearly proves

how much men gain by this demonstration of the existence and attributes of God, namely, their utter inability to adduce any defence of themselves before the judgment seat of God, where they justly stand condemned. We must, therefore, make this distinction, that the demonstration of God, by which he makes his glory appear in his creatures, carries along with it, in its own intrinsic light, sufficient evidence, and this is only defective on account of our blindness. But we are not able to cover our ignorance by this blindness without being convicted of perverseness. We form a conception of the divinity, and our reason afterwards informs us that we are under the necessity of worshipping such a Being, whatever its character may be. But our judgment is here defective, for it cannot discover either the nature or character of God. Wherefore the Apostle to the Hebrews (ii. 3) attributes that light, by which any progress is made in understanding the creation of the world, to faith: nor without reason, for we are prevented, by our blindness, from reaching the mark, and we just see sufficient to keep us from the least tergiversation on this subject. Paul proves both of these positions elegantly, (Acts xiv. 17,) when he says, that the Lord, in times past, suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he gave rain and fruitful seasons from heaven. This knowledge of God, therefore, which is only able to deprive man of the power of excusing himself, is very different from the saving knowledge mentioned by Christ, (John xvii. 3,) and in which Jeremiah (ix. 24) teaches us to glory.

*Because that when they knew God*—He here plainly testifies that God had insinuated into the minds of all a knowledge of himself, or, in other words, had so demonstrated his existence by his works, as to reduce mankind to the necessity of seeing what they

do not spontaneously seek, the being of a God ; since the world neither existed by chance, nor proceeded from itself. But we must always carefully attend to that degree of knowledge, where they were at a stand, as the following passage fully proves.

*They glorified him not as God*—No conception can be formed of God without his eternity, power, wisdom, goodness, truth, justice, and mercy. His eternity appears from his being the Author of all. His power, because he holds all things in his hand, and makes all things to consist in himself. His wisdom is evident by the most well-ordered disposition of everything. His goodness, because no other cause can be assigned why he should create all things, nor could any other reason than this induce him to preserve what was created. His justice appears in the administration of the world, because he punishes the guilty and defends the innocent. His mercy, because he endures, with so much patience, the perverseness of men. His truth, because he is immutable. Whoever, therefore, has formed a proper notion of God, owes him praise for his eternity, his wisdom, his goodness, and his justice. Since mankind have not acknowledged such attributes, but have dreamed, as it were, about some vain phantom, they are deservedly said to have deprived him, in an ungodly manner, of his glory. And Paul justly adds, *neither were thankful*, for there is none who is not indebted to his infinite kindness ; and we are bound to him by a very deep obligation, on this account alone, because he condescended to disclose himself to us.

*But became vain*—They left the truth of God, and turned aside to the vanity of their own imagination, the quickness of which is altogether vain, and glides away like smoke ; and *their foolish mind*, thus in-

volved in darkness, could perceive nothing aright, but was sunk into every kind of errors and falsehoods by all the means which they could devise. This is their unrighteousness, that the seed of proper knowledge is choked by their wickedness, before it can spring up into a crop.

*Professing themselves*—Many, from this passage, generally derive an argument for thinking that Paul has here only to deal with philosophers, who peculiarly arrogated to themselves the character of wisdom. And they consider Paul, in the chain of reasoning pursued in this discourse, to have intended to destroy, first, the eminence of the great, and to infer as a conclusion, that nothing worthy of praise is to be found in the crowd of common people. But they appear to me to be influenced by not sufficiently conclusive reasoning, for it does not peculiarly belong to the philosophers to think themselves wise in the knowledge of God, but is equally common to all nations and to all ranks. For every one was desirous to shut up the majesty of God under the boundaries of his own capacity; and to make such a Deity as each could perceive by his own understanding. This rash presumption in man is not learned in the schools, but is innate, and, if I may be allowed the expression, comes forth with us from the womb; for it is evident that this evil has flourished in all ages, since men allowed themselves every latitude in the discovery of superstitious practices. They are, therefore, accused of the following arrogance—that when they ought in their humility to give glory to God, they wished to be wise among themselves, and to bring down God to their own low and grovelling state. For Paul maintains the principle, that none is alienated from the worship of God but by his own fault: as if he had said, Since these exalted themselves in pride, they have been infatuated by the just ven-

gence of God. For the following reasoning immediately opposes the interpretation which I reject, that the error which characterised the Deity by fixing up his image, did not originate with philosophers, but was first received from others, and afterwards stamped also by the sanction of the learned.

*And changed*—After they had imagined such a God as could be comprehended by their carnal sense, it was impossible for them to acknowledge the true God, but they invented a fictitious and new Deity, or rather a spectre in his stead. Hence the apostle says they *changed the glory of God*, for they departed as much from the true God as if any person should substitute one child for another. Nor does the pretext afford an excuse, that, notwithstanding all their inventions, they believe God to dwell in heaven; that they regard the wood, not as God, but as his image, for they dishonour God by forming so gross an imagination of his majesty, as to dare to represent him by an image. And none of them can be exempted from the crime of such bold presumption; neither priests, nor legislators, nor philosophers, the most sober of whom, Plato, also traces a form and figure in God. The very circumstance of their all wishing to figure to themselves a God is distinguished by madness, for nothing proves more clearly the grossness and folly of the fancies which they formed of God. And in the first place they dishonoured the majesty of God by the likeness of a *corruptible man*. For I prefer *corruptible* to *mortal*, approved by Erasmus, since Paul not only opposes the *mortality* of man to the *immortality* of God, but his glory, liable to no vices, to the very wretched condition of man. Besides, not content with so great a crime, they descended to the *beasts*, the most deformed and hideous of their kind, which shows, in a still more striking light, their great stupidity. Lactantius, Eusebius,

and Augustine, in his work concerning the city of God, treat of these abominations.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dis-honour their own bodies between themselves. 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and wor-shipped and served the creature more than the Cre-ator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one towards another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not con-venient: 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despite-ful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobe-dient to parents, 31 Without understanding, cove-nant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

*Wherefore God gave them up—Because impiety is a*

secret vice, he proves, by a more palpable and homely demonstration, to prevent them from having recourse any longer to tergiversation, that they could not escape, but were justly condemned, since effects followed their impiety, which left no doubt of the manifest indications of the wrath of God. But if the indignation of the Lord is always just, it follows that something had preceded which involved them in condemnation. From these symptoms, therefore, the apostle now urges the apostacy and revolt of the human race, since God so avenges those who have alienated themselves from his goodness, as to cast them down headlong into multiplied and various perdition and ruin. And by comparing the similitude of the vices to which they are addicted, with the impiety alleged against them, he proves their punishment to depend on the just judgment of God. For since we prefer nothing to our own honour, it is the height of blindness when we do not hesitate to disgrace ourselves. This punishment, therefore, is best suited to the dishonour by which the Divine Majesty is marred. He pursues this one object to the conclusion of the chapter, and discusses it in various ways, because much illustration and enlargement were required. The sum, therefore, of what he contends for is, that his former statement proves man's ingratitude to God to be inexcusable, because the wrath of God is undoubtedly proved, in their own case, to be violent against mankind; for never would they, like brute beasts, have been tumbled into such shameful and base desires, if they had not incurred the hatred and opposition of the Supreme Creator and Governor of all things. Since, therefore, most flagrant vices every where abound, he infers that undoubted proofs of divine vengeance manifest themselves in the human race. If this anger never rages in a rash or unjust manner, but always preserves the

moderation of justice and equity, he intimates that it is hence evident how certain and how just a destruction menaces the whole descendants of Adam. It is not by any means necessary for us to enter, in this place, into a long discussion concerning the manner by which God delivers man up to vice. Men, however, are certainly not allowed to fall merely by permission and connivance ; but God so orders it by a just judgment, that they are led and hurried off into such outrageous behaviour and conduct, both by their own concupiscence, and by the devil himself. The word, rendered, *gave them up*, is constantly used in Scripture, which is too violently perverted by those who consider us driven to sin by the alone permission of God. For as Satan is the minister, and, as it were, the executioner of the wrath of God, his anger is not armed against us in a dissembling manner, but by the command of the Judge. Nor is God, therefore, cruel, or we innocent, since Paul clearly shows us to be delivered over to the power of Satan, because we merit such punishment. This exception must, however, always be made, that the cause of sin, whose roots perpetually reside in the sinner himself, does not arise from God ; for that passage in Hosea xiii. 9, must always continue true : “ Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ; but in me is thine help.” When he joins the desires of the human heart with uncleanness, he secretly intimates the corruptions which it would bring forth, if once left to act according to its own character. The expression, *between themselves*, is emphatic ; for it very significantly shows how deep the marks of ignominy are, and how difficult to be washed out, with which they have branded their own persons.

*Who changed*—He repeats the reason, though in different words, yet in nearly the same sense with the last, that he may fix it deeper on the mind. When

*the truth of God is changed into a lie his glory is obliterated, and it is therefore just that such as have attempted to deprive God of his honour, and to deform the glory of his countenance, should be covered with every kind of ignominy and disgrace.*

*And worshipped*—I have given this translation for the purpose of adapting the two words to the same syntax. He properly marks here the crime of idolatry, for honour cannot be given to the *creature* for the sake of religion, without transferring it in an unworthy and sacrilegious manner from God ; and it is a vain excuse to pretend that images are *worshipped* in the place of God, since he does not acknowledge nor accept such worship ; and not a true, but a false God, which the flesh hath vainly imagined for itself, is then completely adored. I interpret the words *who is blessed*, to be used for the purpose of inflicting greater dishonour upon idolatry, and the following is the sense of the passage : “we ought to honour and adore God alone, and we are not permitted to take away from him anything, even the smallest ray of glory.”

*For this cause God gave them up*—He now returns, as if a parenthesis had been interposed, to his former remarks on the “vengeance of the Lord ;” and he adduces, as the first proof of it, the horrid crime of unnatural venereal indulgence, which proves man to have abandoned himself, not only to bestial desires, but even to such as are more degrading, since they are subversive of the whole order of nature. He then enumerates a long catalogue of vices, which existed in all ages, but at that time reigned everywhere with the most abandoned licentiousness. The mere circumstance that they were not all involved in such a sink of guilt makes no difference, for in taxing the common baseness of mankind it is sufficient, if every one is compelled to acknowledge some blemish.

For we must consider Paul in this passage to touch slightly upon those crimes which had been common in all ages, and were everywhere conspicuous—most particularly at that period. For it is astonishing how frequently this abominable practice, which even brute beasts hate, was then indulged ; and other vices were universally prevalent. He then recapitulates that catalogue of crimes which comprehends the whole human race ; for though all men are not either murderers, thieves, or adulterers, yet every individual is found polluted with some vice. Paul denominates those *vile affections* which, in the opinion of men, are considered shameful, and contribute also to the dishonouring of God.

*Receiving that recompence of their error which was meet*—For they deserve to be blinded that they may forget themselves, and may not behold what is calculated for their good, who have shut their eyes by their own malignity against the offered light of God, lest they should behold his glory. Finally, that they may be blind at mid-day, who have not been ashamed to extinguish, to the utmost of their power, the glory of God which alone enlightens us.

*And as they did not like*—The allusion in these words must not be overlooked, which elegantly intimates an equal relation between sin and punishment. Because *they did not like* to remain in the *knowledge of God*, which alone directs our minds to true wisdom, the Lord gave them a perverse mind, which could now approve of nothing : and the meaning of the passage *they had not liked*, is the same as if he had said, “that they had not prosecuted the knowledge of God with the zeal which they ought to have shown, but had rather designedly turned aside their thoughts from God.” He means, therefore, that by a depraved choice they had preferred their

own vanities to God ; and the error by which they had been deceived was, in this sense, voluntary.

*To do those things which are not convenient*—Because he had hitherto proposed that execrable proof of guilt, which was frequent with many, but not the common vice of all, he here begins to enumerate those vices from which none were found to be exempted. For, as we have stated, although all vices may not at the same time appear in each individual, yet all men are conscious to themselves of some one vice, so that each for himself can be convicted of manifest depravity. He means, in the first place, by *things not convenient*, such behaviour as was abhorrent to every dictate of sound reason, and inconsistent with human duties. For he produces as proofs of a disordered mind, that men without choice bound themselves to the perpetration of crimes, which common sense ought to despise. It is a vain attempt, in connecting the order and arrangement of the vices enumerated, to make one spring from the other, for this was not the design of the apostle, but to throw them together as each first occurred to his mind. We will give a very brief exposition of these vices. *Unrighteousness* means when the law of humanity is violated, by not paying every one his due. The word which I have translated, according to Ammonius, *wickedness*, is malice in exercise, or a more unrestrained indulgence in the commission of vice, for he explains the adjective wicked to mean, *the perpetrator of evil*. *Maliciousness* is that depraved perverseness of mind which labours to inflict an injury upon its neighbours. I have translated the word *concupiscence*, which is generally understood to signify *fornication*, a sense involved in mine, since it relates both to the internal desire, and to the external act. *Covetousness, envy, murder*, admit of no doubtful mean-

ing. The word *debate* includes both strife, disturbance, and seditious commotions. *Malignity* implies a remarkable and distinguished wickedness, where a person, from custom and bad habit, has become callous and hardened in the corruption of his morals. *Haters of God*, undoubtedly means, in an active sense, men guilty by their evident crimes, and who detest God, since they see his justice is opposed to their wickedness. *Whisperers* separate the friendships of good men by secret accusations, inflame their minds to anger, defame the innocent, sow discords, &c. *Backbiters*, with a certain innate malignity, spare the character of no one, and, as if harassed by a rage for evil speaking, revile equally the meritorious and the vile. *Despiteful* characters mean, in the original, such persons as are guilty of plundering, theft, burnings, poisoning, witchcraft, and of other striking injuries. *Proud*, in the Greek, relates to those who, being raised as it were upon an eminence, look down with contempt upon all beneath them, and cannot regard any as on a level with themselves. *Boasters*, imply such as are inflated with the vain applause of presiding over others. Those are unsocial, who, by their iniquities, break asunder from all the bonds of human society, in whom there is no sincerity or constancy of faithfulness, and who deserve to be denominated truce-breakers. Those are *without natural affection*, who have laid aside the feelings of humanity towards their own. *Unmerciful*—for Paul considers a want of mercy among the symptoms of depraved human nature; and hence Augustine concludes against the stoics, that pity is a Christian virtue.

*Who, knowing the judgment of God*—Though this passage is taken in various senses, the following appears to me the truest explanation: “that men had given themselves up to an unbounded licentiousness

in sinning, and approved, by removing all distinction between virtue and vice, both in themselves and others, such things as they knew to be displeasing to God, and condemned by his just judgment." For the greatest accumulation of evil takes place, when the sinner has so completely laid aside all shame, as not only to sooth himself in his vices, and to refuse to be corrected, but also to cherish the same conduct in others by his favour and applause. This desperate state of wickedness is thus described in the Scriptures ; " who rejoice to do evil," (Prov. ii. 14,) and boast in their iniquity. (Ezek. xvi. 25.) For hopes may be entertained of curing him who is sensible of shame ; but when, from the practice of sinning, such abandoned impudence has been contracted, that vices please and are approved instead of virtues, all hopes of correction are at an end. (Jer. xi. 15.) I am induced to adopt this interpretation, because I perceive the apostle desirous to touch upon something more dreadful and wicked than the mere perpetration of vice. I know not what this means, if we do not refer it to that highest pitch of wickedness, when wretched men, contrary to the justice of God, renounce all modesty, and undertake the patronage of vice.

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## CHAPTER II.

1 THEREFORE thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

This reproof is aimed against the hypocrites, who,

while they attract the eyes of men by performing the duties of external holiness, conceive also security before God as if they had afforded him every satisfaction. Paul, therefore, after he had demonstrated grosser vices, that he might leave none just before God, attacks this class of sanctimonious characters, who could not be comprehended under the first catalogue. The inference is too plain and easy to allow any one to wonder from what source the apostle proves his position. He therefore makes them *inexcusable*, because they who know the judgment of God nevertheless break the law: as if he had said, “ Though you do not consent to the vices of others, nay, appear a decided enemy and avenger of them, yet, because you are not free from them, if you fairly examine yourself, it is impossible to offer any defence of your conduct.”

*For wherein thou judgest another*—Besides the elegant allusion of the Greek words, which mean to *judge* and to *condemn*, we must notice his exaggeration against them, for his observation amounts to the following effect: “ You deserve to be twice condemned, who are liable to the same vices which you condemn and accuse in others.” For it is a well-ascertained opinion, that such as demand from another a particular rule of life, enjoin also to themselves the law of innocence, continency, and all other virtues; and that they are unworthy of pardon, if they commit the same things which they have undertaken to correct in another.

*For thou that judgest doest the same things*—Such is the literal expression; the sense is: “ Although you judge, yet you do the same actions yourself;” and he says this because their mind is not right, for sin properly belongs to the mind. And they condemn themselves in this respect, because, while they disapprove of a thief, or of an adulterer, or of an evil-speaker,

they do not pass judgment merely against persons, but vices, which adhere also to their own bones.

*But we are sure that the judgment of God*—Paul's plan is to prevent the hypocrites from lulling themselves into security, as if they had attained some great object, if they are either praised by the world, or absolve themselves, for a very different examination awaits them in heaven. Moreover, because he accuses them of internal impurity, which, being concealed from human eyes, cannot be convicted and made manifest by human testimony, he appeals to the judgment of God, from which darkness itself is not concealed, and by a sense of which sinners, whether they will choose it or not, must necessarily be touched. This truth of judgment consists in two circumstances ; first, it will punish guilt, without respect of persons, in whatever character it shall have been detected ; and in the second place, it does not regard external appearance, nor is content with the mere performance of a duty, if it does not arise from real sincerity of mind. Hence it follows, that a mask of feigned piety does not prevent him from punishing secret wickedness by his judgment. The word *truth*, according to the Hebrew idiom, means the same as internal integrity of heart, and is thus opposed, not only to gross falsehood, but to the external appearance of good works. Hypocrites will then awake, when God shall not only pass judgment finally on their pretended righteousness, but on their secret affections.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ? 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ? 5

But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds : 7 To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life ; 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile : 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile ;

*And thinkest thou, O man*—Since it is a precept among rhetoricians not to have recourse to vehemence of reproof before the crime has been proved, Paul may be considered by some to appear, in this instance, to rise up without sufficient reason, who inveighs so keenly before he has completed the intended accusation. But the case is widely different, since he did not accuse them before men, but convicted them in the judgment of conscience. And he evidently considered that he had proved what he intended, for if they should descend into their own hearts, and admit the examination of divine judgment, they would not be able to deny their iniquity. Nor is it without great necessity that he reproves such feigned sanctity by so much severity and keenness ; for this class of men rest in themselves with wonderful security, unless they are shaken out of their vain confidence by some violent effort. Let us, therefore, remember, that the best way of con-

victing hypocrisy is to rouse it from its state of intoxication, and drag it before the light of divine judgment.

*That thou shalt escape*—An argument derived from the less to the greater. For if flagrant enormities must necessarily be subject to the judgment of man, much more of God, who is the alone Judge of all men. Men are carried on, by a divine instinct, to condemn crimes; yet this is only an obscure and slight shadow of God's judgment. Those are very foolish who think they can deceive the judgment of God, when they do not suffer even others to escape from their own. He uses the word *man* twice in an emphatic sense, with a view to contrast man with God.

*Or despisest thou the riches*—I do not, with some, consider this to be a dilemma, but the anticipating of an objection. For since hypocrites are generally puffed up by prosperity, as if they had merited God's clemency by their good deeds, and thus become more hardened into a contempt of him, the apostle meets their arrogance, and proves, by an argument derived from a contrary subject, that they have no cause to consider God to be propitious to them by external prosperity, since he adopts a very different plan for conferring kindness as a method of converting sinners to himself. Where, therefore, the fear of God does not reign, security in prosperity is a contempt and mocking of his immense goodness. Whence it follows, that those will justly experience more severe judgments who have been spared by God in this life, because, to their other wickedness they have added the rejection of the fatherly invitation of God. And although all God's favours are so many testimonies of his fatherly goodness, yet, because he has often a respect to a different object, the wicked foolishly congratulate themselves

in prosperity, while he cherishes them in a sweet and kind manner, as if they were dear to him.

*Not knowing that the goodness*—For the Lord, by his lenity, shows us that he is himself the person to whom we ought to be turned, if we desire prosperity ; and he, at the same time, raises our confidence of expecting mercy. If we use not the kindness of God with this design, we abuse it, though it is not constantly to be received by all in the same manner ; for while the Lord treats his own servants with indulgence, and follows them with earthly blessings, he declares by such symbols his own kindness, and accustoms them at the same time to seek for the sum of all good things in himself alone. When, however, he treats transgressors of the law with the same indulgence, he is desirous to soften their obstinacy by his own bounty, though he does not now prove himself propitious, but rather calls them to repentance. If any one objects that the Lord labours in vain, when he does not affect their hearts internally, we answer, our depravity alone can be blamed in this instance. The Greek word signifies *to lead by the hand*, rather than *to invite*, and does not convey the idea of driving by force.

*After thy hardness*—Impenitence follows when we have hardened ourselves after receiving admonitions from the Lord, for such as are not solicitous about repentance, manifestly tempt the Lord ; and we learn, from this remarkable passage, what we have already hinted, that the wicked not only heap up daily for themselves severe judgment from God, as long as they live here, but all the divine gifts, which they constantly use, will prove to their condemnation, for they will be called to give an account of them all. And they will then find, what will justly be imputed to them as the summit of their guilt, that they have been made more aban-

doned by the very kindness of God, which ought to have corrected and improved their conduct. We must, therefore, take great care lest, by an unlawful abuse of blessings, we lay up for ourselves this treasure of unhappiness.

*Against the day of wrath*, literally, *in the day of wrath*—For the wicked now prepare the indignation of God against themselves, whose force will be poured out upon their head in that day; they heap up for themselves secret destruction, which will then be displayed from the treasury of God. The day of the last judgment is called *the day of wrath*, when the wicked are addressed, though it is the day of redemption to the faithful; thus certain other visitations of the Lord are always described as dreadful, and menacing indignation to the wicked, which, on the contrary, are sweet and pleasant to the pious. When the Scripture makes mention of the nearness and presence of the Lord, he orders the pious to leap for joy; and when he turns himself to the reprobate, he makes him afraid with fear and terror. “That day,” says Zephaniah, (i. 15,) “is a *day of wrath*, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste-ness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloomi-ness, a day of clouds and thick darkness.” A similar passage occurs in Joel ii. 2; Amos also ex-claims, (chap. v. 18,) “Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness and not light.” Moreover, when Paul adds the *day of revelation*, he intimates what *the day of wrath* is, namely, *when the Lord will manifest his judgment*, of which he daily affords some proofs, but suspends and preserves a clear and full manifestation of it to that great day. For the books will then be opened; the lambs will be separated from the kids; and the wheat be cleansed from the tares.

*Who will render to every one*—Since the apostle has to deal with blind pretenders to sanctity, who think they very well conceal the wickedness of their hearts, provided they have, I know not what disguise as a pretext for their vain works : he has here determined the true righteousness of works, which will be regarded before God, that they may not hope to please him, if they have merely brought forth words, and trifles alone, or leaves. There is not in this sentence so much difficulty as is generally thought. For if the Lord shall punish with just vengeance the wickedness of the reprobates, he will only repay them what they deserve. Again ; because he sanctifies such as he has determined at some future period to glorify, he will also crown their *good works*, but not according to merit. Nor can this be proved from the present passage, which, though it states *the reward due to good works*, neither mentions their value, nor their desert. It is a weak inference to conclude any thing to be merit because it is rewarded.

*To those who, by patient continuance, literally patience*—Perseverance takes place when any one is not fatigued with a *continuance* in good works, but *patience* is likewise required for saints, that they may continue firm, and resist the various temptations to which they are exposed, and whose weight they are enabled to bear by this virtue. For Satan does not allow them to go to the Lord in an easy course, but endeavours to prevent them by various impediments, and to turn them from the right path. His observation, that the faithful, by continuing in good works, *seek for glory and honour*, does not mean their aspiring to any thing else than the Lord, or their desiring any object of greater worth or excellence. But they cannot seek him without aiming, at the same time, to attain the happiness of his kingdom, which is described by the circumlocution

here used. The sense, therefore, is, that the Lord will give eternal life to those who meditate on immortality by the zealous practice of good works.

*But to those who are contentious*—This passage is a little confused. In the first place, because the thread of the discourse is broken, which, to make it unite with the corresponding member of the sentence, must be supplied ; “ the Lord will give eternal life to those who, by perseverance in good works, seek for glory, honour, and immortality ; but eternal death to those who are contentious, and do not obey the truth.” The connexion would then be supplied *that glory, honour, and immortality* were secured for the former ; and *anger* and *affliction* laid up for the latter. In the second place, because the words *indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish*, are applied to two different members ; yet this by no means disturbs the sense of the passage, which we chiefly seek in the writings of the apostle Eloquence must be learned from other authors ; spiritual wisdom must be here sought under the despicable meanness of words. *Contention* means *rebellion* and *obstinacy*, because Paul contends with hypocrites, who laugh God to scorn by a gross and supine indulgence. The rule of the divine will, which alone is the light of truth, is simply indicated by the word *truth*. For it is the common character of all unbelievers constantly to prefer the devoting of themselves to the slavery of iniquity, to the taking of the yoke of God ; and whatever obedience may be pretended, they do not cease with obstinate contention to rail at, and struggle against, the word of God. For as openly wicked characters mock at this truth, so hypocrites have no hesitation in opposing counterfeit worship to its simplicity. Moreover, the apostle adds, that such contentious characters *obey unrighteousness*, for there is no intermediate step for such as will not yield

to the law of the Lord, but their becoming afterwards the slaves of sin. And it is the just reward of furious licentiousness for those to be brought under the slavery of sin, who refuse obedience to God.

*Indignation and wrath*—Great heat, and sudden inflammation of anger, is meant by the Greek for *indignation*. *Tribulation* and *anguish* are the effects of *indignation* and *wrath*; for such as experience God's anger and opposition are immediately and entirely worn out by them. But as the apostle could briefly, by two words, point out the happiness of the *pious* and the ruin of the *reprobate*, he enlarges upon both expressions at greater length, that he may intimidate men in a more striking and efficacious manner by the fear of God's anger, and influence them with a desire of obtaining grace by Christ Jesus. For we never sufficiently fear the divine judgment, unless it is placed before our eyes by a vivid description. Nor are we ever inflamed with an earnest zeal for a future life, unless roused by many and very powerful excitements.

*To the Jew first*—I doubt not but the *Jew* is simply opposed to the *Gentile*, who were formerly denominated *Greeks*. The Jews precede, in this instance, who have the promises and threatenings of the law; as if he had said, “this is the universal law of the divine judgment, which will begin with the Jews, and include the whole world.”

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.  
12 For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)

*There is no respect of persons*—Hitherto, in ge-

neral, he has brought all mortals as guilty to trial ; he now begins to convict the Jews and Gentiles separately, and, at the same time, informs them, that no distinction or separation from each other could prevent them from being both equally liable to eternal death. The *Gentiles* took their defence from *ignorance*, the *Jews* boasted in the title of the *law*. He deprives the Gentiles of any opportunity for escaping in consequence of such a plea, and puts an end to the vain and false boasting of the Jews. The whole human race is divided into two classes ; for God had separated the Jews from the rest, but the Gentiles were all treated in the same manner. Now this *distinction* teaches us that nothing prevents them from being both included under the same accusation of guilt. The word *person*, in Scripture, relates to all external things which are valued and honoured. When, therefore, you read that *God is no respecter of persons*, you must understand him as regarding the purity and internal innocence of the heart, without dwelling on family, country, dignity, power, and such like, which are generally esteemed among men ; *respect of persons*, therefore, means, in this passage, choice and distinction between different nations. If any one should hence assert, in a cavilling manner, that the election of God is not gratuitous, he must be answered by showing that there is a two-fold *respect of men* in the presence of God. The first means, his choosing us with gratuitous goodness, after calling us from nothing, since in our nature there is nothing which he can approve. The second implies, his embracing us with gifts, after he has regenerated us, and following, with his favouring regards the image of his Son, which he recognizes in us.

*Who sinned without the law*—In the first division he attacks the *Gentiles*, and though they enjoyed not

Moses, as a promulgator and ratifier of the law from the Lord, yet, the apostle says, it did not prevent them from drawing down upon themselves the *just judgment of death* by their sins ; as if Paul had said, the knowledge of a written law is not necessarily required for the just condemnation of a sinner. Consider, therefore, the cause undertaken to be defended by those who endeavour, with preposterous mercy, to exempt, under the pretext of *ignorance*, from the judgment of God, the Gentiles, who are deprived of the light of the gospel.

*Who have sinned in the law*—As the Gentiles, carried away by the errors of their judgment, fall headlong into a pit, so the Jews appeal to the law for judgment. Its sentence, however, is long ago pronounced, “ Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written *in the law* to do them.” (Deut. xxvii. 26.) A worse state, therefore, awaits Jewish sinners, whose condemnation is now pronounced in their own law.

*For not the hearers of the law*—Paul anticipates the exception, or restraining clause, which the Jews could adduce. They boasted in the alone knowledge of *the law*, because they *heard* it to be a rule of righteousness. In refuting this fancy, he asserts that the mere *hearing or understanding of the law*, has no weight and power by which righteousness may be secured, and proves the necessity of bringing forth good works according to Moses ; (Deut. iv. 1,) “ He that doeth these things shall live in them.” The import, therefore, of the present passage is, if righteousness is sought by *the law*, then it must be fulfilled, for the righteousness of *the law* is placed in the perfection of works. Such as abuse this passage, in support of justification by works, deserve the scorn of children. It is altogether preposterous and irrelevant to introduce here long discus-

sions on *justification*, for solving so futile a cavil. The apostle presses upon the Jews only the judgment of the law, which he had mentioned, because they could not be justified *by the law* without fulfilling it ; and, if they transgress it, the curse of the law was immediately prepared against them. We allow absolute righteousness to be prescribed in the law, but since all are convicted of transgression, we assert the necessity of seeking for another righteousness. Nay, from this passage, we can prove that none are justified by works ; for if they only, who fulfil the law, are justified by it, the consequence is, that no human being can be justified, because none is found who can boast of his having fulfilled the law.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves : 15 Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another,) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

*For when the Gentiles*—He now repeats the proof of the former part of the sentence. For he is not satisfied to condemn us by the word, and to pronounce the just judgment of God against us ; but he endeavours to convince us of it by reasoning, that he may excite in us a greater desire and love of Christ. For he proves the Gentiles to adduce *ignorance* in their defence, without proving any thing, since they declare, by their own deeds, that they have a certain rule of righteousness. For there never yet was

found a nation so barbarous as not to restrict itself within certain laws. Since, therefore, all nations are disposed of their own accord, and without an instructor, to pass laws for themselves, there can be no doubt that certain notions and anticipations of justice and righteousness had been naturally innate in the minds of men. They have, therefore, a law without a law; for though they have not the *written law* of Moses, yet they do not want altogether a knowledge of right and equity. For they cannot otherwise make a distinction between vice and virtue; the former of which they restrain by punishments, the latter secures their commendation, approbation, and the honour of rewards. Paul opposes nature to the *written law*, for the natural splendour of justice enlightens the Gentiles, and supplies the place of *law*, in which the Jews are instructed. It is in this manner the heathens are *a law to themselves*.

*Who show the work of the law written*—They testify the discrimination and judgment by which they distinguish between justice and injustice, honour and dishonour, to be inscribed on *their hearts*. The apostle does not mean *the work of the law* to be so engraven on their will, that they desire and eagerly pursue it; but they are so far overcome by the power of truth, as to be compelled to sanction its justice by their approbation. For why do they establish religions, but because they think that God is to be worshipped? Why are they ashamed of fornication and theft, if both these are not regarded by them as evil? The power of our will, therefore, is in vain attempted to be exalted and advanced from this passage; as if Paul had said, “the observance of the law is subject to our power, when he is speaking, not of our power to fulfil the law, but of our knowledge of it. Nor is the word *heart* used here for the seat of the affections, but for the understanding, as in

Deut. xxix. 4, "The Lord did not give you a *heart* to believe ;" " Foolish men, and slow of *heart* to believe." (Luke xxiv. 25.) Besides, we must not from hence infer that men are possessed, by nature, of a complete knowledge of law, but certain seeds of justice are only implanted in their mind ; such are the institutions of religious worship alike by all nations, the punishment of adultery, theft, murder, and the praise of faithfulness in commercial transactions and contracts. For they thus prove themselves to be acquainted with the existence of a God, with the crimes of adultery, theft, and murder, and with the praise due to probity. Nor is it of importance what such a God their imagination conceives, or what number of deities they form ; it is sufficient to find them acquainted with the existence of a God, and with the duty of honouring and worshipping him. It is not of much consequence whether they allow the coveting of the wife of another man, or of his property, or possessions, or whether they connive at anger and hatred, since they will not be permitted to covet what is known to be a crime when perpetrated.

*Conscience bearing them witness, and their thoughts* —He could not press them stronger than by the testimony of their own *conscience*, which is equal to a thousand witnesses. Men endure patiently, and are comforted, from the conscious recollection of good actions ; they are harrassed and tormented in their own minds when condemned by the voice of *conscience*. Hence the maxims of our ethical writers, " that a good *conscience* is the largest theatre, and a bad one the worst of executioners, which torments the wicked in a more cruel manner than all the furies." There is, therefore, a certain understanding of natural law which dictates one action to be virtuous and to deserve the pursuit of all, while it holds up another to our utmost detestation. Observe,

also, with how much learning he describes *conscience*, when he says, that reasons present themselves to our thoughts, by which we can defend our conduct when right ; and, on the contrary, very opposite arguments strike the mind when we are accused and convicted by crimes. He refers these reasons, by which we *accuse* and *defend* ourselves, to the *day of the Lord* ; not because they will then, for the first time, exhibit themselves, which are constantly now in a vigorous state performing their office, but because even then they will be efficacious, and prevent every one from despising them as frivolous and vain.

*In which God will judge the secrets of men*—This is a circumlocution of judgment very appropriate to the present passage, for the purpose of convincing such as would willingly be concealed in hiding places, formed by their own stupid imaginations, that these innermost thoughts, now entirely hidden in the recesses of the heart, will then display themselves to the light of day. As in another passage, while he is desirous to point out to the Corinthians the nothingness of human judgments, which stop short in external appearances, he orders them to wait “till the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” (1Cor. iv. 5.) When we hear this, let us remember the admonition, that we may endeavour to attain genuine sincerity of mind, if we are desirous truly to approve ourselves to our Judge. He adds, *according to my gospel*, signifying the doctrine published by him to correspond with the naturally innate feelings and judgments of mankind. He calls the gospel *his own*, on account of his ministry. For the authority of publishing the gospel is in the power of one God, the alone dispensation of it being entrusted to the apostles. But we need not wonder, if part of the gospel is said to be the messenger and herald’s voice

to a future judgment. For if the effect and fulfilment of the promises are put off to the full revelation of the heavenly kingdom, it must necessarily be joined with the last judgment. Christ also cannot be preached except to some for their glory, and to others for their ruin, each of which pertains to the day of judgment. I refer the words by *Jesus Christ*, though others disagree with me, to the judgment, because the Lord will execute his own judgment by his Son Christ Jesus ; for he is appointed by the Father Judge of the living and of the dead, which is always reckoned by the apostles among the chief articles of the gospel. This gives a fulness to the meaning of the passage, which is otherwise frigid.

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, 18 And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law ; 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of godliness, knowledge, and of the truth in the law. 21 Thou therefore which teachest, teachest thou not thyself ? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ? 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ? 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God ? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

*Behold, thou art called a Jew*—Some ancient copies instead of *behold*, read, *if thou art called a Jew*, and had it been equally sanctioned, I should have approved of its adoption. Since the sense of the passage, according to our present editions, is sufficiently clear, and the other reading occurs in fewer copies, I retain the ancient, especially since one particle is of slight importance. Paul, having now finished the case of the Gentiles, returns to the Jews, and that he may in a more forcible manner repress all their vanity, he grants them all those privileges, on account of which they were puffed up with pride. He afterwards proves how insufficient they are for true glory, nay, how much they may contribute to their dishonour. Under the name of a *Jew* he comprehends all the prerogatives of the nation derived from the law and prophets, to which they made a false pretension, and he thus understands all the Israelites who at that time were promiscuously denominated Jews. It is, moreover, uncertain at what period this name began, but it was undoubtedly first used after the dispersion. Josephus, in the eleventh book of his Antiquities, considers it to have been derived from Judas Maccabeus, under whose auspices the liberty and dignity of the people, which had for some time fallen into decay, and been almost buried, again revived. If any are not content with this opinion, which I consider probable, I will also state another conjecture of my own. I certainly think it likely, after they had been shorn of their honours by so many defeats, and scattered into distant lands, that they might not have been able to preserve any certain distinction of tribes: for the number of the population could not be taken at the regular period; their civil polity, so necessary for preserving this order, was at an end; their habitations were scattered and straggled; and the adversity by which

they were worn down, made them less attentive to their genealogical records. Should my readers not be disposed to grant the whole of my statement, yet he must allow there was great danger of such an event occurring from so great a scene of confusion. Whether, therefore, they were desirous to look forward to the future, or to afford their assistance to an evil under which they were then suffering, I think they would all, at the same time, have had recourse to the name of that tribe, in which the purity of their religion had been preserved for a greater length of time, which surpassed all the rest in the singular prerogative of the Redeemer being expected to arise from it, for their last refuge in the greatest difficulties was to console themselves with the expectation of the Messiah. They professed themselves, in the name of Jews, to be the heirs of the covenant, which the Lord had entered into with Abraham and his seed.

*And restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God*—He does not mean that they had *rested* in the study of the law, as if they had devoted all their mind to its observance; but he rather blames them, because, not considering for what purpose the law had been given, they neglected to obey it, and were puffed up with the opinion of the oracles of God being committed to their trust. In the same manner they *boasted of God*, not as the Lord had commanded by the prophet, (Jer. ix. 24,) that being humbled in ourselves, we may seek our glory in God alone; but without any knowledge of the goodness of God they made Jehovah, who was not internally possessed by them, peculiarly their own, for the sake of vain ostentation among their fellow men, and vaunted in being his people. This is not the glorying of the heart, but the *boasting* of the tongue.

*And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent*—He now grants their understand-

ing of the Divine will, and approval of what was useful, which they had gained from the doctrine of the law. There are two kinds of approbation: one of choice, when we embrace what we have proved to be good; another of judgment, which enables us to distinguish good from evil, while we by no means pursue it with zeal or ardour. The *Jews* were so skilled in the *law*, that they could exercise the office of censorship on others, but were by no means desirous to regulate their own life accordingly. Moreover, when Paul discusses their hypocrisy, we may easily infer on the other hand, provided our judgment is conducted with sincere affection, that we finally approve in a proper manner of what is useful, when we attend to God; for his will, as it has been *revealed in the law*, is here determined to be the guide and mistress of true approbation.

*And art confident that thou thyself*—He bestows, also, more upon them, as if they had not only sufficient for their own use, but for the enriching of others. He supplies them, I say, with as much learning as may also redound to the advantage of others. For they, therefore, professed themselves teachers, because they had the pompous appearance and show of learning, and seemed to carry about with them in their breasts all the secrets of the law. They were undoubtedly vain of that knowledge in which they *boasted*. But Paul, while he indirectly laughs at their vicious abuse of the law, shows on the other hand that proper knowledge must be sought for from the law, that truth may rest on a solid foundation.

*Thou therefore which teachest another*—Although the praises which he had hitherto stated of the Jews were such as might justly adorn them, provided other ornaments of a more true and valuable character were not wanting; yet, since they contained ordinary gifts, which even the wicked might possess, and

corrupt by a depraved abuse, they are by no means sufficient for conferring solid glory. But Paul, not content with refuting and eluding their arrogance, retorts it to their disgrace, because they confided in their privileges alone. For he deserves to experience no small disgrace, who not only renders excellent and admirable gifts of God useless, but vitiates and contaminates them by his own depravity. He also is a perverse counsellor, who, neglecting to give himself useful advice, is only wise for the interests of others. Paul, therefore, proved that to be productive of their dishonour, from which they were desirous to receive praise.

*Thou that preachest a man must not steal*—He seems to have made an allusion to a passage in Psalm l. 16 : “But unto the wicked God said, What hast thou to do with my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth ? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.” This reproof, as it formerly applied to the Jews, who, depending upon their mere knowledge of the law, lived no better than if they wanted the law, may also be turned against Christians, if we do not take great care. And it indeed applies too much to many who, while they *boast* of a certain rare knowledge of the gospel, abandon themselves to every kind of profligacy, as if the gospel was not a rule of life. That we may not so securely jest with the Lord, let us call to our recollection what dreadful judgments impend over such mere flourishers in words, who boast of the word of God by their prating alone, and mere babbling.

*Thou that abhorrest idols*—He properly opposes *sacrilege* to *idolatry* as a subject of the same kind. For *sacrilege* is simply a profanation of the Divine

Majesty, with which both heathens and poets were acquainted. In this sense Ovid's Metam. III, accuses Lycurgus of *sacrilege*, because he depised the sacred rights of Bacchus. And in the Fasti he denominates them *sacrilegious* hands which violated the deity of Venus. But since the Gentiles affixed the majesty of their gods to idols, they only called it *sacrilege* when any one stole away what was dedicated to their temples, in which they considered their whole religion to consist. Thus at the present time, where superstition reigns instead of the word of God, they acknowledge no other kind of *sacrilege*, than the purloining of riches from their temples, since they have no god but idols, no religion but pomp and luxury. And we are here, in the first place, admonished not to please ourselves, and despise others, when we have performed some part of the law. In the second place, while we glory on account of external *idolatry* being removed from among us, we ought in the mean time to banish and eradicate, with great care, every secret impiety from our minds.

*Thou that boastest in the law*—Although every transgressor of the law dishonours God, since we are all born on this condition to worship him with righteousness and holiness, yet he justly, in this case, imputes special guilt to the Jews. For when they proclaimed God to be their legislator, and were by no means careful to regulate their lives according to his rule, they declared themselves to pay little attention to the Majesty of their God, which they could so easily despise. Thus also, at the present time, such as idly prate concerning the doctrine of Christ, while at the same moment they trample upon it by their headstrong and libidinous course of life, dishonour the Messiah by the transgression of his gospel.

*For the name of God*—I consider this quotation

to be taken from Ezekiel xxxvi. 23, rather than Isaiah lii. 5, because there are no reproaches against his people in Isaiah, with which the whole chapters in Ezekiel abounds. Some consider this to be an argument from the less to the greater in the following sense: "If the prophet justly blamed the Jews of his age, because the glory and power of God were despised among the heathen on account of their captivity, as if he was unable to preserve the nation which he had taken under his protection, much more are you the dishonour and reproach of God, whose very base morals cause an evil report against his religion." I do not condemn this interpretation, but prefer a more simple one, as if Paul had said, we see all the reproach of the people of Israel to fall upon *the name of God*, because the Jews, being considered and reported to be his, carry *the name of God* engraven upon their foreheads, so that the Deity is, in some measure, dishonoured among men by the baseness of a people boasting in his name. And it is very unbecoming for a people, who borrow their glory from God, to fix the stamp of ignominy upon his sacred name, since he deserved at least to have received from them a different recompense.

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. 26 Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? 28 For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is *that* circumcision which is outward in the

flesh : 29 But he *is* a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

*Circumcision verily profiteth*—Paul anticipates and removes the exception which the Jews could adduce in defence of their cause. For if circumcision was a symbol of the covenant of the Lord, by which he had chosen Abraham and his seed for a peculiar people, they thought, on this account, that they did not boast in vain. But since they omitted the truth of the sign, and fixed their attention on its external appearance alone, he answers, they had no cause to arrogate any thing to themselves from a naked sign. The truth of circumcision was placed in the spiritual promise, which required faith. The Jews neglected both the promise and faith, and for this reason their confidence was vain. Hence it is, that here, and in his Epistle to the Galatians, he omits the chief use of circumcision, and accommodates his discourse to the gross errors of the Jews. This must be carefully attended to, for had the apostle been discussing the whole nature and reason of circumcision, it would have been absurd entirely to omit all mention of grace and gratuitous promise. But in both passages he speaks according to the circumstance of the subject which he treats, and, therefore, only handles the controverted part. They considered circumcision of itself to be a work fit for procuring righteousness. He answers, therefore, addressing them according to their own opinion, if a work is regarded in circumcision, its condition must be, that the person circumcised should act in all things as an entire and perfect worshipper of God ; and perfection, therefore, is the work of circumcision. We may say the same also of

our own baptism : should any one, depending on the alone confidence of the baptism of water, consider himself justified, as if he had procured holiness from that work, the design of baptism, by which the Lord calls us to holiness of life, must be brought forward as affording an answer to this opinion. The promise and the grace, which baptism testifies and seals to us, would be passed over in silence by our opponents, because we have to deal with writers who, content with the empty shadow of baptism, neither regard nor consider what is truly important in that sacrament. You may observe, in the writings of Paul, when he is reasoning with the faithful concerning signs, and without controversy, he connects the efficacy and fulfilment of the promises ; but, where he is discussing a subject with preposterous interpreters, unacquainted with the nature of signs, in this case he omits mentioning the proper and genuine nature of signs, and directs all his arguments against their false interpretation. And many, because they find Paul adduce circumcision rather than any other work of the law, think him to deprive ceremonies alone of any claim for righteousness. But this is not the case, for it always happens that such as dare advance their merits against the righteousness of God, boast more in external observances than in solid probity. For whoever is touched and affected with a serious fear of God, will never dare to lift up his eyes to heaven ; for the more he aims at the attainment of true righteousness, so much the more fully will he discern his great distance from it. But we need not wonder if the Pharisees, who are content to have shadowed out holiness by an external pretence, so easily flatter themselves in a dangerous security. Paul, therefore, having left the Jews nothing but this miserable subterfuge of boasting on their being justified by circumcision, now also deprives them of this vain pretence.

*If, therefore, uncircumcision*—The argument is very strong. Every thing is inferior and made subordinate to the end. Circumcision has respect to the law, and therefore ought to be inferior to its power. It is of more importance, therefore, to keep the law than circumcision, which was established for its sake. Whence it follows that an uncircumcised person, provided he keeps the law, is much superior to a Jew, who transgresses the law with his dry and useless circumcision; and thus, though polluted by nature, he will be so sanctified by observing the law, that uncircumcision shall be imputed to him as circumcision. The word *uncircumcision*, in the second passage, occurs in its proper sense; in the first it properly means a *Gentile*, and the thing is understood to mean a *person*. Besides, none need be anxious about the worshippers to whom Paul here alludes, since it is impossible to find them. For Paul's intention was simply to propose the following hypothesis,—If any Gentile can be found who observes the law, his righteousness in uncircumcision is to be esteemed more highly than the Jew's circumcision without righteousness. I, therefore, do not refer the passage following,—*and shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee who by circumcision dost transgress the law?*—to the persons, but to the example it affords. The words of Paul lead us to this sense, which is the same as “the queen of the south shall come,” &c., and “the men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment,” (Matt. xii. 41, 42.) The Gentiles, says Paul, who observe the law, shall judge thee a transgressor of the law, though he is without circumcision, and thou art literally circumcised.

*By the letter and circumcision*—The meaning is, *literal circumcision*. He does not understand that the Jews break the law in consequence of their

having the letter of circumcision, but because they cease not, with their external ceremony of circumcision, to obliterate the spiritual worship of God, namely,—piety, righteousness, judgment, and truth, which are the principal points of the law.

*For he is not a Jew*—A true Jew is not to be determined either from his carnal descent, or from the title of his profession, or an external symbol; nor does circumcision, which makes a Jew, consist in external figure alone, but both are internal. His additional remarks on true circumcision, are derived from various passages of Scripture, and from the common doctrine of the word of God, for the people is everywhere commanded to circumcise their heart, and God promises to do it. For circumcision did not imply the trifling destruction of one part, but the cutting away of our whole nature. Circumcision, therefore, was the mortification of the whole flesh. By the *letter*, he means external observance without piety; *spirit* implies the design of the ceremony, which is spiritual. For since the whole weight of signs and rites depends on the design, if this be taken away, the letter alone remains, which of itself is utterly useless. The apostle adopts this language, because wherever the voice of God sounds, or any of his precepts are given, if men receive them not with sincere affection of the heart, they remain in the letter, in cold dead writing; but if they penetrate the mind, they are in some measure transformed into the spirit. An allusion is also made to the difference between the Old and New Testament, observed by Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 33, where the Lord says he will ratify and establish his covenant, after he has put his law in their inward parts, and written it in their hearts. Paul had regard to the same subject, when, comparing the law with the gospel, he calls the former the *letter*, which is not only dead, but even killeth; and the latter he distinguishes by the praise

of the *spirit*. The folly of those interpreters was uncommonly gross, who understood by the *letter* the genuine sense, and by the *spirit* allegories.

*Whose praise is not of men*—Because the eyes of men are fixed upon mere appearances, he asserts we ought not to be contented with what is only commended by human opinion, which is so apt to be deceived by external splendour ; but to be satisfied with the eyes of God, from which the most hidden secrets of our hearts are not concealed. Thus he again brings back hypocrites, who deceive themselves by false opinions, to the tribunal of God.

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### CHAPTER III.

1 WHAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? 2 Much every way : chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

Although Paul carried on the dispute with great ability, to show that empty, vain circumcision was of no use to the Jews; yet, because he could not deny a difference between the Jews and Gentiles, which had been distinguished by the Lord with this sign, and it was absurd to make a distinction unprofitable and unimportant which had God for its Author; this objection also required solution. The boasting of the Jews from this source was clearly proved to be foolish. The difficulty still remained, for what purpose was circumcision established by the Lord, if it did not deserve to be commended for some advantage? He therefore asks, by way of meeting the objection, In what does the Jew surpass

the Gentile? And he subjoins the reason of this question by asking another, when he says, *What profit is there of circumcision?* For it separated the Jews from the common lot and condition of men, as Paul calls ceremonies (Eph. ii. 14) a wall which separated one class of mankind from another.

*Much every way*—He here begins to praise the sacrament, yet in such a way as not to allow the Jews to be proud on its account. For when he says, they had been distinguished by the sign of circumcision, for the purpose of their being considered the sons of God, he does not confess that they had attained this excellence by any merit or dignity of their own, but by the kindness and favour of God. If they are considered in their character as men, he proves them to be equal to others; if God's favours are considered, he proves them in this respect to be more distinguished than other nations.

*Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God*—Some consider it inconclusive, because he proposes to do more than he afterwards explains and accomplishes. The sense is, Although the single circumstance of the oracles of God being intrusted to their care ought to be sufficient to secure their dignity, it is worthy of remark, that the use of circumcision does not consist in the mere sign, but its value is determined by the word of God. Paul here proposes the question, What advantage does the sacrament of circumcision confer on the Jews? His answer is, That God has deposited with them the treasure of heavenly wisdom, whence it follows, if the word of life is removed, no excellence remains. Paul means by *oracles* the covenant first divinely revealed to Abraham and his posterity, and afterwards recorded and explained by the law and the prophets. The oracles are intrusted to the keeping of the Jews, while it pleased God to confine his

glory among them, which were afterwards, in the time of God's dispensation, to be published through the whole world. The Jews were at first the depositaries, and afterwards the stewards of the oracles of God. If, while the Lord deigns to communicate his word to any nation, it is to be regarded as so great a favour, we can never sufficiently detest our own ingratitude for receiving his oracles with so much negligence and indolence, not to say scorn.

3 For what if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect ? 4 God forbid : yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mayest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

*For what if some did not believe ?*—As before, when he regarded the Jews as exulting in a mere naked sign, he did not grant them a single spark of glory, so now, when he is considering the nature of the sign, he testifies that its value is not destroyed even by their vanity. Since, therefore, he seemed before to have hinted that the ingratitude of the Jews had destroyed all the favour bestowed upon them in the sign of circumcision, he now again asks, by way of meeting the objection, “What opinion ought to be entertained of its use?” By his silence on this occasion he understands more than he expresses, for it would have been true, had he said that a large part of the nation of the Jews rejected the covenant of God ; but as such language would have grated on their ears, he diminishes its severity by restricting his censure to a few.

*Shall their unbelief*—The Greek word means to “render vain and without effect,” and is very well

suiting not only whether the unbelief of men can prevent the truth of God from remaining firm and stable, but whether its influence and fulfilment among them may thus be impeded. "Since, therefore," the apostle asks, "many of the Jews are covenant-breakers, is the covenant of God so abrogated by their perfidy, as to produce no effect among them?" He answers, "It is impossible for human depravity to destroy the steadfastness of divine truth." Although a great part of the Jews has acted a deceitful part towards the covenant, and trampled upon it, yet it continues to retain its efficacy, and exerts its power, if not in all, at least in the nation itself. The meaning of the sentence is, that by the grace of God a blessing, even for eternal salvation, is in force among them, which can only happen where the promise is received by faith, and a mutual covenant confirmed on both sides. He intimates, therefore, that some in the Jewish nation, "continuing firm in the faith of the promise," had not been deprived of this prerogative.

*But let God be true*—Whatever opinion others may entertain, I consider the force of the argument to consist in the necessary position of the contrary, by which Paul weakens the preceding objection; for if these two propositions stand together, nay, necessarily agree, that God may be true and man a liar, the consequence follows that the truth of God is not prevented by the falsehood of man. For if he did not here oppose these two principles to each other, he would be inconsiderately and uselessly engaged soon after in refuting the absurdity, how God may be just, if he commends his own righteousness by our unrighteousness. The sense, therefore, is clear, that the fidelity of God, so far from being overthrown by the perfidiousness and revolt of man, is thus rendered more distinguished. He calls God *true*, not only because he

is prepared faithfully to abide by his promises, but he accomplishes in deeds whatever he declares in words ; for he says, " As my power, so shall my work be." Man, on the contrary, is a liar, not only because he often breaks his promise, but also by nature he desires falsehood, and avoids truth. The first position is the primary axiom of the whole Christian philosophy. The latter is taken from Psalm cxvi. 11, where David confesses there is nothing certain, either from man or in man. But this is a striking passage, and contains very necessary comfort, for so perverse is man in rejecting or despising the word of God, that he would often doubt its certainty, if he did not remember that the truth of God depends not on the truth of man. But how does this agree with the following expression : " That the faith of man, which receives the divine promise, is required for its efficacy ?" for faith is opposed to falsehood. The question appears difficult, but its solution is not attended with much trouble ; for the Lord, by the lies of men, which are otherwise obstacles to his truth, will find a way through places otherwise impassable, that he may gain the superiority by correcting in his elect the innate unbelief of their nature, and subjecting to his obedience such as appeared invincible. He is now disputing concerning the vice of nature, not the grace of God, which is the remedy of our vices.

*That you may be justified*—The sense is, our falsehood and perfidy are so far from destroying the truth of God as to make it shine with greater splendour. As David testifies (Psalm li. 4) that God, whatever he may determine against the Psalmist, since he is a sinner, will be a just and righteous Judge, and overcome all the calumnies of the wicked who may desire to murmur against his righteousness. David understands, by the *sayings* of God, the judgments

he may denounce against us, for it is too forced to understand, as is generally done, the promises. The sentiment of David, "I have sinned against thee, therefore thou wilt be justly entitled to punish me," confirms this view of the passage. The objection afterwards added, proves Paul had cited this passage of David in its proper sense; "how shall the integrity of God's righteousness continue, if our iniquity exalts its glory?" For Paul, as I have lately hinted, detains his readers in a very useless and unseasonable manner by this difficulty, if David did not mean that God, by his admirable providence, elicited the praise of his own righteousness from the sins of men. The second position in the Hebrew is, "And be pure in judging thee." The import of this expression is, that God, in all his judgments, deserves to be praised, however much the wicked may rail, and endeavour with hatred to bury his glory in oblivion by their complaints. But Paul followed the Greek translation, which also suited better his present purpose. For we know the apostles were not very strict in making quotations from the Old Testament, since they were satisfied if the passage cited applied to the subject, and were not, on this account, so scrupulous in the words which they adopted. The present passage may be thus applied: "If any of the sins of mankind are necessarily required in giving lustre to the glory of God, and he is chiefly glorified in his truth, it follows that human vanity serves rather to commend than subvert his truth." And though the Greek word admits either of a passive or active signification, yet I am sure the translators took it in a passive sense, contrary to the mind of the Psalmist.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man,)

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? 8 And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

*But if our unrighteousness*—It was necessary for the apostle to insert this, though a digression from the general subject, that he might not appear to have afforded the malignant a handle, which he knew they were glad to take, for railing against him. For as they watched every opportunity for defaming the gospel, the testimony of David afforded them a subject for calumny: “If God seeks nothing else but to be glorified by man, why does he punish delinquents, when their transgressions add to his glory? He is certainly offended without a reason, if the cause of his wrath is derived from the very subject by which he is glorified.” There can be no doubt this was a common and trite calumny, as it will again in a short time be repeated, and on this account Paul could not pass it over without some observation. To prevent, however, any one from thinking him to adduce in this passage the conception of his own mind, he states in the preface that he assumes the character of the wicked. He forcibly attacks, though in one word, human reason, whose property he insinuates to consist in always snarling against the wisdom of God; for he does not say he speaks as the wicked, but *as a man*. And this is really the case, for since all the mysteries of God are paradoxical to the flesh, man is so bold as to rise up against them without hesitation, and to inveigh, in a petulant manner, against subjects which he does not comprehend. This

admonition teaches us, that, if we are desirous to understand such mysteries, we must particularly renounce our own sense of them, and must devote and give ourselves up entirely to the obedience of the word. The word *wrath*, which means judgment, is here transferred to punishment, and implies the following sense : “ Is God unjust, who punishes crimes that display his own justice ?”

*God forbid*—In checking this blasphemy, he does not give an immediate answer to the objection, but first commences with stating his utter detestation of the opinion, that the Christian religion may not appear to be accompanied with such great absurdities. And this is much stronger than a simple refutation, for he implies that such impious language ought to excite their horror, and not be listened to for a moment. He afterwards adds an indirect refutation, as it is termed, for he does not entirely clear away the calumny, but only states in his answer the absurdity of the objection. He also takes an argument from the office of God himself, to prove its impossibility ; “ God will judge this world, therefore he cannot be unjust : ” this is derived not from the mere potentiality of God, as they state, but from his actual dominion, which shines forth in all the course and order of his works, and implies the following truth—The duty of God consists in judging the world, in settling it by his justice, and reducing into the most perfect order every derangement it exhibits. God, therefore, can form no unjust law. Paul seems to have alluded to the passage in Moses, (Gen. xviii. 25,) where, while Abraham entreats God not to deliver Sodom up to entire destruction, he says, “ That be far from thee, who art the Judge of the earth, to slay the righteous with the wicked ; for that is not thy character, nor can it belong to thee.” Job, in a similar sense, observes, (xxxiv. 17,) “ Shall even he that hateth

right govern?" for unjust judges are often found among men, either because they usurp power against all justice and equity, or are inconsiderately raised to such an honour, or degenerate from their own true character: nothing of this kind can occur in God. Since, therefore, he is by nature Judge, he must necessarily be just, for he cannot deny himself. Paul, therefore, reasons from the impossibility of injustice being ever truly alleged against God, whose property and essential character it is to govern the world in righteousness; and though this doctrine of Paul extends to the continued government of God, yet I grant an allusion is particularly made to the last judgment, for then, finally, a solid, firm renewal of right order will take place. If, however, you are desirous to have a direct refutation of such impious positions, the following merits consideration: "God's justice is not more clearly manifested from the nature of injustice, but his goodness overcomes our wickedness, by giving a different direction to the design and tendency of our conduct."

*For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie*—This objection, I doubt not, is also brought forward in the character of the wicked. It is an explanation of the former, and would have been connected with it, had not the apostle, feeling indignant at the dishonour offered to God, broke off in the middle of his discourse. The following is the sense of the passage: "If the truth of God is made more plain, and in some measure established by our falsehood, so that more glory results from our conduct to the Supreme Ruler, it is not right to punish him as a sinner who has been the servant of the glory of God."

*And not as*—This elliptical sentence may be thus supplied: And why is it not rather said, as we are

accused by some, that we must do evil that good may come ? The apostle does not condescend to answer this sophistry, which, however, may very easily be refuted. The wicked adduced the following pretext, —If God is glorified by my iniquity, and the most honourable part of a man's conduct, through life, is to promote the glory of the Lord, then I ought to sin for the purpose of advancing the glory of the Ruler of the universe. The objection can easily be removed, for evil in itself can produce only evil. Our vice casts lustre upon God's glory, not by the work of man, but of God, who, as a wonderful Creator, knows how to subdue and direct our wickedness into another channel, so as to convert it, contrary to our intended design, to the increase of his glory. God has appointed piety, consisting in the obedience of his word, as the way by which he is desirous we should glorify him ; and every person who over-leaps the bounds determined by his truth, endeavours rather to disgrace than to honour God. The different result which follows from the conduct of the wicked, is to be ascribed to the providence of God, not the depravity of man, that was prepared, not only to injure, but to subvert the majesty of the Deity.

*As we are accused*—It is surprising, when Paul discoursed concerning the secret judgments of God with such solemnity, to find his enemies calumniating him with so much frowardness ; but no piety, however great, no sobriety, however distinguished, in the servants of God, can check the impure and virulent tongues of the wicked. It is no new example, therefore, that our doctrine, which we ourselves know to be the pure gospel of Christ, and to us all the angels and believers bear witness, should be loaded at this present time with so many accusations, and rendered so odious by our adversaries. Nothing can be

conceived more strange and monstrous than what is here adduced against Paul, for the purpose of making the ignorant and unexperienced dislike his preaching, in consequence of the disreputable reports circulated to its dishonour. Let us, therefore, patiently bear the calumnies with which the wicked assail the truth ; nor let us ever cease constantly to maintain its simple confession, since it has sufficient power to crush to pieces, and disperse, their greatest falsehoods. But, after the example of the apostle, let us oppose, as much as we can, their malicious devices, that these flagitious and abandoned sorry fellows may not rail against their Creator with impunity. *Whose damnation is just*—Some take it in an active sense, as if Paul assented to the absurdity of the objection, that the doctrine of the gospel may not be considered to be in the least connected with such paradoxes. I approve more of its requiring to be understood in a passive signification, for it would not have been consistent to give a simple assent to so great a wickedness, which ought rather to have been sharply reproved, and I think Paul adopted this course. Their perverse conduct deserved to be condemned on two accounts ; first, that they could ever assent to this impiety from the conviction of their understanding ; in the second place, that, by their very traducing the gospel, they had the hardihood to contrive such a calumny against so glorious a truth.

9 What then ? are we better than they ? No, in no wise : for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.

*What then ?*—He returns from his digression to the subject in hand. For, to prevent the Jews from objecting, on any account, that they were deprived of their rights, after he had recounted the praises of

dignity, by which they exalted themselves above the Gentiles, he now finally solves the question whether they surpassed the heathens in any respect. For though this answer seems, in appearance, to disagree a little with the former, since he now deprives those of all dignity, on whom he had before bestowed much, yet there is no opposition. For those privileges, in which he confessed them to excel, are external, consisting in the goodness of God, and not their own merit. But here he inquires, whether they had any dignity of their own in which to glory in themselves. These two answers, therefore, so agree, that one results from the other. For when he extolled their prerogatives, included in God's benefits alone, he shows them to have nothing purely their own ; and hence the answer, which he now gives, might immediately be inferred. For if their chief excellence consists in the oracles of God being deposited with them, and they possess not this from any merit of their own, they have no cause for boasting in the presence of God. Observe the holy artifice of the apostle, who addressed the Jews in the third person, when he claimed for them any excellence. But when he is now desirous to take all from them, he joins himself to their number, that he may avoid giving offence. *For we have before proved*—The Greek word here is properly a judicial one, for an accuser is said to establish an indictment in an action, which he is prepared to substantiate by other testimonies and proofs. And the apostle has cited the whole human race before the tribunal of God, that he might include all under one condemnation. Some may in vain object, that the apostle does not here merely charge with a crime, but rather proves it, for a real accusation rests on firm and valid proofs, as Cicero has, in some part of his writings, made a distinction between accusation and reproach.

Moreover, to be *under sin*, implies the same thing, as to be justly condemned before God as sinners, or to be under the curse which is due to sin. For as righteousness is associated with acquittal, so condemnation follows an offence.

10 As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one : 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit : the poison of asps *is* under their lips : 14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness : 15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood : 16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways : 17 And the way of peace have they not known : 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

*As it is written*—His reasoning has hitherto been designed to convince men of their iniquity. He now begins to derive his arguments from authority, which is the strongest kind of proof with Christians, provided the authority of God alone is appealed to. Let teachers of the church hence learn the character of their office. For if Paul here asserts no doctrine, which he cannot at the same time confirm by the certain oracle of Scripture, much less ought those to attempt it, who have no other command to preach the gospel, than which they have received by the hands of Paul and others. *There is none righteous*—The apostle makes one general position, before he descends to particulars, following rather the sense of the passage than the entire expressions ; and states,

first, the sum of those things which are related by the prophet to be in man, namely, that *there is righteousness in none*, and afterwards enumerates, in separate parts, the fruits of his unrighteousness. (Psalm xiv. 1.) The first fruit is a want of understanding in all men. He afterwards convicts them of folly, because they do not *seek after God*. (Psalm liii. 3.) For the man who is not possessed of the knowledge of God, whatever other kind of erudition he may have attained, is a vain person. Nay, even the very sciences and arts, which are good in themselves, are rendered vain if they want this foundation. He adds, *there is none that doeth good*, by which he means, they have laid aside all sense of humanity. For as our best bond for mutual union with each other, is found in the knowledge of God, since, in the character of a common Father to all, he reconciles us in the best manner to each other, so out of Him every thing is merely in a scattered and dissipated state ; because want of humanity generally follows our ignorance of God, while each, treating others with contempt, loves and seeks himself. He next subjoins, *their throat is an open sepulchre*, (Psalm v. 10,) a gulf for the ruin of their fellow-men. The expression is stronger than men-eaters, for it is the height of barbarism that man's throat should be so dreadful a whirlpool as to be able to swallow down and to consume his fellow-mortals whole and entire. The same meaning must be annexed to their *tongues being deceitful*, and their lips lined with *poison*. (Psalm cxl. 4.) It is added, their *mouth is full of cursing and bitterness*, (Psalm x. 7,) a vice opposite to the former ; but the meaning is, that they breathe forth wickedness in every part ; for if they speak pleasantly they deceive, and drink to their neighbour poison, under the most captivating smiles, and with the most flattering language ; but, if they speak their

real sentiments, *bitterness and cursing* is the language of their lips. The expression in Isaiah lix. 7, is very beautiful, *destruction and misery is in their ways*. For it is the personification of the most barbarous ferocity, which, by carrying universal destruction with every step, makes all around one solitude and desolation. In this form of ruin and havoc, Pliny describes Domitian. It follows, that *the way of peace they have not known*, for being habituated to rapine, violence, injuries, and savage cruelty, they know not how to do any thing in a friendly or kind manner. He again, at the conclusion, repeats, in different language, the sentiment with which he commenced, that all depravity flows from the contempt of God. For whenever we have forsaken the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, nothing right or sincere remains. Since, finally, the fear of God is a bridle, by which our wickedness is restrained, its removal gives a loose to all the licentiousness of vice. But that none may regard these quotations as wrested by forced interpretation from their original meaning, we will carefully consider the sense of each passage from the nature of the context. David, in the 14th Psalm, ver. 1, says, there was so much perverseness in the human character, that God, on looking down from heaven, and examining the whole race of mankind in succession, to see if there was any just person, could not find even one. This proves the whole human race to have been infected with this moral pestilence, since nothing escapes the all-seeing eye of God. He speaks, indeed, towards the conclusion of the Psalm, concerning the redemption of Israel; but we will show, in another passage, after what manner, and to what extent, saints may be delivered from this general state of moral degradation. He complains, in other Psalms, of the wickedness of his enemies, where he shadows

forth in himself and his descendants a certain type of Christ; under his adversaries, therefore, all Christ's enemies, who are not led by the Spirit of God, are intended. Isaiah expressly mentions Israel, and his accusation is also much more true against the Gentiles. In short, we cannot doubt that human nature is pointed out to us in these testimonies, and we may hence clearly see what man is when left to his own heart, since the Scripture testifies all the unregenerate to be of this description. The condition of the saints would not be in any respect superior to that of others, unless their depravity was corrected. The seeds of vices are felt in the remains of their flesh, with which they are constantly encompassed, and would invariably bring forth fruit, if they were not prevented by Christian mortification, for which they are indebted to the mercy of God, and not to their own nature. The design of God, in permitting the remains of sin in believers, is to make them remember that the corruptions of their own nature differ in nothing from those of others. The circumstance of all the vices here enumerated not appearing remarkable in every individual does not prevent them from being truly and justly collected together as a mass in human nature, which we have noted above. (Chap. i. 26.)

19 Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

*Now we know*—Passing by the Gentiles, he expressly applies these testimonies to the Jews, whom

he found it much more difficult to subdue, because being destitute, as well as the Gentiles, of real righteousness, they defended themselves under the pretext of God's covenant, as if their separation from the rest of the world, by his election, would be sufficient for their holiness. And he produces, indeed, the way by which the Jews endeavoured to escape, which he knew them to be very dexterous in seizing ; for whatever harsh expressions the law uses against the whole human race, they usually applied to the Gentiles, as if they were exempted from the common condition ; and this was the case, provided they had not fallen from their rank and station. Paul, therefore, lest they should be prevented by the false imagination of their own private dignity, and restrict to the Gentiles alone what promiscuously pertained to the Jews, anticipates the objection, and proves them, from the design of Scripture, not only to have been mixed with the crowd, but to have particularly come under this condemnation. The apostle shows great diligence in refuting the objections of his countrymen. For to whom was the law given ? Was it not designed as a means for instructing the Jews ? What it states of others was accidental, or beside the point ; and its doctrine is chiefly suited to its own disciples. *In the law—* Paul says the law was designed for the Jews, and the conclusion is, that it chiefly regarded them. He comprehends also, under the name of *law*, the prophets, and the whole of the Old Testament. *That every mouth may be stopped—* That all tergiversation and power of excuse may be cut off. This metaphor is borrowed from trials, where the defendant, if he can say any thing in his just vindication, demands to be heard in his turn, that he may exculpate himself from the accusation laid to his charge ; but if he is weighed down by his own conscience, he says nothing,

and, without speaking a word, expects condemnation, since he has already lost the trial by his own silence. The form of expression, Job xxxvi. 37, “ I will lay my hand on my mouth,” must be understood in this sense. For Job says, though he could produce some kind of defence, yet, laying aside all thought of self-justification, he was ready to submit to the sentence of God. The following part of the verse is explanatory. For his mouth is stopped, who is so completely entangled in his trial as to be able by no means to escape. In other passages, to be silent before the face of the Lord, means to tremble at his majesty, and to stand mute, as it were, with astonishment at his brightness.

*Because by the works of the law*—The learned themselves doubt what is meant by *the works of the law*; for, while some include the observance of the whole law, others confine it to the ceremonies alone. The addition of the word *law* induced Chrysostom, Origen, and Jerom, to coincide with the last opinion. For they considered this addition denoted some peculiar works; and restricted the passage from being applied to every sort. This difficulty can be very easily solved; for because works are so far righteous before God, as we endeavour by them to worship and obey him, with a view more expressly to deprive all works of the power of justifying, he named those which, more than any other, possess that power. For the law has promises annexed, without which our works would be of no value before God. You see, therefore, in what way Paul has expressed the *works of the law*, because, indeed, by the law, a value is fixed upon our works. Nor are the schoolmen ignorant of this, for it is a trite and common expression with them, that works are meritorious, not by any intrinsic dignity, but by compact. And though they are mistaken, because they do not consider

works to be always so polluted by vices as to deprive them of all merit, yet the principle is true, that the reward of works depends upon the voluntary promise of the law. Paul, therefore, with prudence and propriety, does not dispute about mere works, but in an express and particular manner regards the observance of the law, which was the subject then under consideration. The arguments adduced by other learned men, in support of this opinion, are more flimsy than might have been expected. They consider that circumcision was mentioned as an example belonging to ceremonies alone. But we have already explained why Paul has mentioned circumcision, for hypocrites alone are inflated with confidence in their works ; and we know they boast only in external appearance as a mask. Circumcision also, in their opinion, was a certain initiation into the righteousness of the law, and seemed, therefore, at the same time, to be a work of primary dignity, nay, as it were, the foundation of the righteousness of works. The other arguments are derived from the Epistle to the Galatians, where Paul, when he handles the same subject, directs all his reasonings to ceremonies alone. This is not sufficiently cogent for their purpose. There can be no doubt Paul was engaged in a controversy with such as puffed up the people with a false confidence in ceremonies. To decide this, he does not confine himself to ceremonies, nor does he peculiarly discuss the question of what use they are, but embraces the whole law, as is evident from the passages, which are all taken from that source. Such also was the state of the dispute maintained at Jerusalem among the disciples. But we contend, with sufficient cause, that Paul is here speaking of the whole law ; for the thread of the dispute, which he has thus far followed, and afterwards adopts, clearly supports us in this opinion ; and many other passages do not permit us to entertain a different view. The

opinion, therefore, is particularly distinguished that none shall obtain righteousness by the observance of the law, because all mankind, being guilty of transgression, stand convicted of unrighteousness by its prohibitions. These two opinions are opposed to each other, as we shall see more fully in the sequel, that a person is considered righteous by his works, and is accused as guilty of transgression. *Flesh*, if not particularly specified, signifies *man*, but it seems to be taken in a still more general sense; as more is expressed, according to Gellius, when we say all mortals, than all men. *For by the law*—He reasons, from the contrary, that we have not righteousness from the law, because it convinces us of sin and condemnation, since life and death do not spring from the same fountain. His reasoning that righteousness cannot be conferred by the law, which is productive of a result directly contrary, can only be felt and understood by considering all hope of salvation to be cut off, as an inseparable and constant accident, by the law proving to every man his own sin. The law, by teaching righteousness, opens the way to salvation; but our depravity and corruption prevent it from producing this effect. We must now also necessarily add, in the second place, that whoever has been found a sinner, is deprived of righteousness. For it is frivolous and trifling to invent a half righteousness, that works may in part justify, as the sophists do, for man's viciousness precludes the possibility of adopting this opinion.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.

*But now the righteousness of God without the law*—It is uncertain in what sense he calls the righteousness obtained by faith to be God's, either because it alone can stand the test in the presence of God, or the Lord confers it upon us by his own mercy. We enter into no dispute on this subject, since either interpretation suits our view. He says, therefore, that this which God communicates to man, and which alone he receives and acknowledges for righteousness, was revealed without the assistance of the law, so that the law may be understood to be taken for works; for it is not proper to refer to doctrine, what he afterwards cites as a witness of the gratuitous righteousness of faith. I will soon prove, that it is vain and frigid to restrict it to ceremonies. We must know, therefore, that the merits of works are excluded. We see also how he does not join ~~join~~ works with the mercy of God, but having removed and blotted out every opinion of works, he sets up this alone. I know well that Augustine gives a different explanation, for he considers the righteousness of God to be the grace of regeneration, and he confesses it to be gratuitous, because God renews us, undeserving as we are, by his Spirit. And he excludes those works of the law by which men endeavour to merit God of themselves without regeneration. I have too much cause also to know that some modern theorists state this opinion with pride and conceit, as one revealed to them at the time. But it may be plainly proved, from the context, that the apostle includes all works without exception, even such as the Lord produces in his people. For Abraham was certainly regenerated and influenced by the Spirit of God, when Paul denies his being justified by works. He excludes, therefore, from man's justification, not only works morally good, as they are generally denominated, and performed by the in-

stinct of nature, but all the works which believers may possess. If, also, " happy are they whose iniquities are forgiven," be a definition of the righteousness of faith, we cannot dispute about different kinds of works, for the merit of all works is abolished, and the remission of sins alone is determined to be the cause of righteousness. They consider these two subjects to agree very well, that man, by the grace of Christ, is justified by faith, and yet justified by works which spring from spiritual regeneration, because God renews us gratuitously, and we perceive his gift by faith. But Paul assumes a very different principle,—that our consciences will never be at peace until they rest on God's mercy alone: in another passage, also, when he taught that God was in Christ justifying men, he, at the same time, expresses the manner, by not imputing sins unto them. In the Epistle to the Galatians, also, he therefore makes the law contrary to faith with respect to the effect of justification, because it promises life to those who do its commands. But the law does not command a literal pretence of works, as a mask, but the sincere love of God. It follows, therefore, that no merit of works is admitted in the righteousness of faith. Hence it is evidently a frivolous cavil to say we are justified in Christ, because we are renewed in the Spirit, so far as we are members of Christ; that we are justified by faith, since we are ingrafted by faith into the body of Christ; that we are justified gratuitously, because God can find nothing in us but sin. For we are, therefore, in Christ, because out of ourselves; therefore, in faith, because we must necessarily rest upon the alone mercy of God, and his free promises; therefore, gratuitously, since God reconciles us to himself by burying our sins. Nor can that be restricted to the beginning of righteousness, as these men dream; for the very definition, " Happy

are they whose iniquities are forgiven," took place in David, when he had long exercised himself in the worship of God: and Abraham, thirty years after he had been called, though he had been an uncommon example of holiness, has no works whereof to glory before the Lord, and therefore his believing the promise is imputed to him for righteousness. And when Paul says, that God justifies men by not imputing their sins, he recites a passage daily read in the church. And that peace of conscience, which is disturbed with regard to our works, is not of one day, but ought to continue during our whole life. Hence it follows, that we are in no other sense just until death, except by looking to Christ alone, in whom God hath adopted and now accepts us. Hence the cavil is refuted of such as accuse us of making a false assertion from Scripture, "that we are justified by faith alone," since the exclusive particle does not occur in Scripture. And if justification exists without law, and out of ourselves, why shall it not be considered to come from mercy alone? If it is of mercy alone, then of faith alone. The particle may either be translated *but* or *now*. If it refer to time, a sense I readily adopt, lest we should appear desirous to escape its force, the alone abrogation of ceremonies is not to be understood, for the intention of the apostle was only by comparison to illustrate the grace which makes us excel the fathers. The sense, therefore, is, that the righteousness of faith had been revealed by the preaching of the gospel after Christ had been manifested in the flesh. It does not thence follow that it had been concealed before Christ's advent: for a double manifestation is here to be considered; the former of the Old Testament, which consisted of the word and sacraments; the latter of the New, which, besides the ceremonies and promises, contains its fulfilment in Christ, to which must

be added a fuller clearness by the gospel. *Being witnessed* — This is added, that the gospel may not appear to contend with the law in the dispensation of gratuitous righteousness; for as he asserted that the righteousness of faith did not require the assistance of the law, so he is now prepared to prove his assertion by its testimony. And if the law afford a testimony to gratuitous righteousness, it is evident that it was not given us to teach men to secure righteousness for themselves by works. The law is perverted by such as wrest it for this purpose. Moreover, if you want a proof of that opinion, follow in order the sum of the doctrine of Moses, and you will find that man in the beginning, after he had been cast out from the kingdom of God, had no other means for being restored than by the evangelical promises, which predicted that the head of the serpent was to be bruised by the blessed seed, in which a blessing is declared to the Gentiles, you will find in the precepts a demonstration of your iniquity; from the sacrifices and oblations you will learn that satisfaction and purification exist in Christ alone. If you come to the prophets, you will there find the clearest promise of gratuitous mercy: on this, see our Institutes. *The righteousness of God* — He shows, in a few words, that this justification resides in Christ, and may be apprehended by faith. He appears, by repeating the name of God, to make him the Author, not merely the approver of the righteousness concerning which he treats; as if he had said, it flows from him alone, its origin is from heaven, and it is disclosed to us in Christ. The following order must be pursued in our inquiries on this subject. First, that the cause of our righteousness is not to be referred to the judgment of men, but to the tribunal of God, where nothing is considered righteousness but the perfect and complete obedience

of the law, as evidently appears from the promises and the threatenings. And if no human being is found, who has attained so strict a holiness, it follows that all want righteousness in themselves. Christ must, in the next place, present himself, who, as he alone is just, so he renders us just by transferring his own righteousness to us. You now see how the righteousness of faith is the righteousness of Christ. The mercy of God is the efficient cause of our justification ; Christ the material ; the Word, with faith, the instrument. Faith is, therefore, said to justify, because it is the instrument for receiving Christ, in whom righteousness is communicated to us. When we are made partakers of Christ, we are not only ourselves just, but our works are considered righteous in the presence of God, because every imperfection in them is obliterated by the blood of Christ ; the promises, which were conditional, are fulfilled to us by the same grace, since God rewards our works as perfect, because their defects are covered by gratuitous pardon. *Unto all and upon all*—He repeats the same in different forms of expression, for the purpose of confirming and magnifying it, that he may more strongly express his former statements, that faith alone is required in this instance, and the faithful are not distinguished by external marks, and on this account it is of no importance whether they are Gentiles or Jews.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; 24 Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; 26 To declare, *I say*, at

this time his righteousness; that he may be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

*For there is no difference*—He enjoins to all without exception the necessity of seeking righteousness in Christ, as if he said, there is no other way of obtaining righteousness. There is not one method for justifying one class of men, and a different one for another, all must be saved by faith, for all are sinners, and therefore none have cause for glorying with God. He takes it for granted that every one, when he comes to the tribunal of God, will feel conscious to himself of his guilt, and be in a state of ruin and confusion under a sense of his own disgrace, hence no sinner can bear the presence of God, as we see in the example of Adam. He again enters the contest, having taken his reasoning from a contrary view of the subject; and on this account we must pay careful attention to his following arguments. Paul infers that since all are sinners, they suffer either from a deficiency or privation of the praise of righteousness, wherefore, according to his doctrine, there is no righteousness but a perfect and finished one. For if there was a half righteousness, it would not be necessary immediately to deprive a sinner of all glory. The hypothesis of what is termed a partial righteousness is thus sufficiently refuted. For if it was true, that we are partly justified by works and partly by the grace of God, this following argument of Paul would be inconclusive: “All are therefore destitute of the glory of God, because they are sinners.” It is certain there is no righteousness where sin exists, until Christ abolish the curse. The same occurs in Galatians iii. 10: all, who are under the law, are subject to the curse, from which we are delivered by the kindness of Christ. He means by the *glory*

of God, that which takes place in the presence of God, as in John, (chap. xii. 43,) “They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.” And thus he summons us from the applause of a human theatre to a heavenly tribunal.

*Being justified freely*—The participle is used commonly in Greek for the verb, and the passage means, “since nothing else remains for men in themselves, but their destruction, being pierced by the just judgment of God, they are therefore justified gratuitously by his mercy ; for Christ assists their misery, and communicates himself to the faithful, so that they find in him alone all things they require.” Perhaps there is no passage in the whole Scripture more remarkable for illustrating the power of this righteousness. For he shows the mercy of God to be the efficient cause ; Christ, with his blood, the material ; faith, conceived by the word, the formal or instrumental ; the glory both of the divine justice and goodness, the final. With respect to the efficient cause he says, we are justified gratuitously, and indeed by God’s grace, and on this account he has twice used the expression : the whole is of God, nothing is ours. It would have been sufficient to oppose grace to merit, if the imagination of a half righteousness had been received by Paul, who has very clearly declared his view by adding a repetition of it, and has claimed for the mercy of God alone the solid effect of righteousness, which the sophists divide into parts, and mutilate, lest they should be compelled to acknowledge their own poverty. *By the redemption*—The matter of our righteousness, because Christ, by his obedience, satisfied the judgment of the Father, and by enduring in our stead freed us from the tyranny of death, by which we were held captive. For our guilt was removed by the expiatory sacrifice which he offered. This is the best refutation of the hypothesis made by

those who consider righteousness to be a quality. For if we are reckoned righteous before God, because redeemed with a price, we certainly borrow from another what is not in ourselves. And Paul afterwards explains more clearly the value or tendency of redemption, namely, our reconciliation to God. For he calls Christ a propitiation, or, what I more approve, as an allusion to an ancient figure, a propitiatory. And what does this mean but that we are just, in proportion as Christ has made the Father propitious to us? We will now carefully consider the import of each expression.

*Whom he hath set forth*—The Greek word has two meanings, *to appoint*, and *to set forth*; if the former sense be admitted, Paul refers to the gratuitous mercy of God, because Christ was ordained a Mediator, to reconcile the Father to us by the sacrifice of his death. For it is no common praise of grace, that God of his own accord found out a means by which he might remove our curse. And certainly the following passage seems to agree with this sense, “God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son.” (John iii. 16.) Should we, however, adopt the other meaning, the same reason will remain, that in his own time God *set forth* Christ, whom he had determined with himself to be a Mediator. The Greek word alludes to the mercy-seat; for he informs us that Christ exhibited in reality, what was represented in a figurative sense to the Jews. Since, however, the other opinion cannot be proved false, if any prefer it on account of simplicity, I shall leave him to make his own choice. Paul has certainly proved from these words, what he was very desirous to do, that God, without Christ, is always angry with us; and we are reconciled to him when received, by his righteousness. For God does not detest in us his own work; it is not our creation as men, but our uncleanness, which ex-

tinguishes the light of his image. When the washing of Christ has wiped away this state of moral defilement, he loves and kisses us as his own pure work. *Propitiatory, or mercy-seat, by faith in his blood*—I prefer a literal translation, since I think Paul's intention was to include, in the same word, the idea of God being made propitious to us, as soon as we repose our confidence in the blood of Christ, because by faith we come into the possession of his benefit. When he names the blood alone, he did not wish to exclude other parts of redemption, but rather to comprehend the whole sum under it, and he named the blood in which we have our font for uncleanness, so that the whole doctrine of expiation is pointed out by this one part. For in addition to what he had lately stated concerning God being pacified in Christ, he shows this effect to be produced by faith, and what our faith ought chiefly to regard in Christ. *For the remission of sins*—“With the design of blotting out sins;” and this definition, or explanation, again confirms what I have so often hinted at already, that men are justified, not because they are such in reality, but by imputation. For he repeatedly uses different words for the purpose of making it still plainer that there is no merit of ours in this righteousness. For if we obtain it by the remission of sins, we conclude it is without us. Besides, if this remission proceeds from the mere bounty of God, all merit falls to the ground. The question may be proposed, why pardon is restricted to sins that are past. Although this passage is variously explained, I consider it probable that Paul's attention was directed to legal expiations, which were, indeed, certain testimonies of future satisfaction, but could by no means appease God. A similar passage occurs in Heb. ix. 15, that the redemption of sins, which remained under the Old Testament, was intro-

duced by Christ; nor ought we to understand with some fanatics, who have ignorantly wrested this passage to support so strange a dream, that the sins merely of former times were expiated by the death of Christ. For Paul only teaches, that no price for atoning God had been paid until the death of Christ, nor had this been performed or fulfilled by legal figures, so that the truth had been suspended until the fulness of time. Daily guilt can be expiated by no other means, for there is only one atonement for all sins. Some, to avoid this fanatical absurdity, said former sins were forgiven, that a license might not seem to be afforded for future sinning. It is indeed true, that pardon is not offered except to sins committed, not because the advantage of redemption can fail or perish, if we afterwards fall, as Novatus and his sect dreamed, but because the dispensation of the gospel is to propose judgment and wrath to a person designing to commit sin, mercy to the sinner. The true sense, however, is the explanation already given. The addition, that this forgiveness was *through the forbearance* of God, means merely mildness, which restrained the judgment of God, and suffered it not to be inflamed for our destruction, until he should receive us into favour. But it appears rather a tacit anticipating of the objection, which some might propose against the late appearance of the grace of Christ, and Paul shows this to be a kind of forbearance.

*To the demonstration*—The repetition of this member of the sentence is emphatic, and designedly intended by Paul, because very necessary, since it is extremely difficult to persuade man to deprive himself of all honour, and bestow it on God, although mention is designedly made of this new demonstration, to make the Jews direct their attention to so important a doctrine. *At this time*—He refers what belonged to all times to the period when Christ

was exhibited, and not without reason, for God openly manifested in his Son what had formerly been known only under the covering of types. Thus the coming of Christ was a time of kindness and favour, and the day of salvation. God gave some proof of his righteousness to all ages ; but when the Sun of Righteousness arose, his splendour shone forth with much greater brightness. We must notice the comparison between the Old and New Testament, because the righteousness of God was evidently then revealed when Christ was exhibited. *That he may be just—* This is a definition of that righteousness, which he said had been displayed when Christ was given, as he had in the first chapter taught it to be manifested in the gospel. And he affirms it to consist of two parts : the first is, that God is just, not indeed as one of many, but as containing alone in himself all the fulness of righteousness. For neither is that complete and solid praise, to which he is entitled, properly bestowed upon him in any other way than by his obtaining alone the name and honour of a just character, while the whole human race is condemned for unrighteousness. The other part consists in the communication of righteousness, while God indeed by no means keeps his riches shut up with himself, but pours them forth upon mankind. The righteousness of God, therefore, shines so far forth in us as it justifies us by the faith of Christ, for Christ would in vain be given for righteousness, if enjoyment did not arise from faith ; hence it follows that all men were unjust, and ruined in themselves until a remedy had been offered from heaven.

27 Where is boasting then ? It is excluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay ; but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

*Where is boasting then?*—After the apostle, by the most solid reasons, had deprived men of all confidence in their works, he now exults over their vanity. This exclamation was rendered necessary, for it would not be sufficient for us to teach this subject, unless the thunders of the Holy Spirit laid low our dignity by the greatness of his power. And he says boasting is excluded without all doubt, since we can produce nothing of our own which merits the approbation or commendation of God. And if merit, whether of congruity or condignity, be a subject of boasting by which man may conciliate God to himself, you see both of these completely subverted ; for the apostle does not here speak of the diminution or moderation of merit, since he does not leave a single drop. Besides, if boasting of works be removed by faith, so that it cannot be purely preached without robbing man entirely of praise, while all power and glory are bestowed on the mercy of God, it follows that no works assist us in the attainment of righteousness.

*Of works?*—How does the apostle deny in this passage our merits to be excluded by the law, since he had before proved our condemnation by the law ? For what glory shall we seek from that which devotes us all to death ? Does it not rather rob us of all glory, and cover us with disgrace ? On that occasion he showed our sin to be disclosed by the judgment of the law, because we had all departed from its observance. But here he means, if righteousness consist in the law of works, our glory would not be excluded ; but as it is by faith alone, we can therefore arrogate nothing to ourselves, for faith receives all from God, and carries him nothing except the humble confession of want. The antithesis between faith and works must be carefully observed, where works are mentioned universally without any addition. He is, therefore, nei-

ther disputing merely concerning ceremonies, nor an external kind of works, but comprehends all the merits of works which the mind can conceive. The word *law* is improperly applied to faith, but this does not obscure the sense of the apostle; for he means, when he comes to the rule of faith, that all the glory of works is completely overthrown; as if he had said, the righteousness of works is, indeed, praised in the law, but faith has its law, which leaves no righteousness in any kind of works.

*Therefore we conclude*—He now infers, without any doubt, his principal proposition, and adds also his explanation, for much light is cast on justification by faith, if works are expressly excluded. On this account our adversaries labour hard at this time to involve and mingle faith with the merits of works. They confess, indeed, that man is justified by faith, but not alone; nay, in reality, they bestow on love the power of justification, though in words they grant it to faith. And Paul, in this passage, so asserts gratuitous justification, as to make it evident that no dignity of works can possibly be joined with it. I have already shown why he calls them the works of the law, and proved the folly of such as restrict them to ceremonies. It is also a frigid hypothesis, to mean by the works of the law, the works of the letter, which take place without the Spirit of Christ; and the epithet means the same as meritorious, since it regards the reward promised in the law. The passage in James, “that man is justified by works, and not by faith only,” is not in any way opposed to the preceding opinion of Paul. The best method of reconciling them is, by considering the nature of the argument used by James in his Epistle. The question is not, how men may acquire righteousness for themselves in the presence of God, but how they can prove themselves righteous. For

he is refuting hypocrites, who make a vain boast in the title of faith. It is, therefore, a gross parallelism, and does not distinguish the different senses in which the word *justification* is used by James and Paul, since they treat on different subjects. The word *faith* is also equivocal, and its various meanings must be explained, if we wish to form a correct judgment of this question. The design of James, as appears from the context, was to show that man is not proved or rendered righteous by a feigned or dead faith, but his righteousness must be confirmed by works. On this subject see our Institutes.

29 *Is he the God of the Jews only?* *is he not also of the Gentiles?* Yes, of the Gentiles also : 30 Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

*Is he the God of the Jews*—The second proposition, that righteousness does not belong to the Jews more than the Gentiles, is now considered. It was of great importance to urge this, with a view to establish the kingdom of Christ in all the earth. He does not, therefore, simply or precisely put the question, whether God created the Gentiles, which was an acknowledged truth, but whether he was desirous to declare himself their Saviour. For after the apostle had made the whole human race equal, and reduced them to the same condition, all distinction between them must be from God, and not from those created beings who are on a level with each other in respect to their works. If it is, indeed, a truth that God is desirous to make all the people of the earth partakers of his mercy ; salvation and righteousness, which are necessary for salvation, are extended to all. The mutual relation, therefore, between God and his people is thus frequently marked in Scripture : “ I will be to

you a God, and ye shall be to me a people." Jer. xxx. 22. For God's electing of a peculiar people to himself for a certain time, does not abrogate the principle of nature, by which it is proved that all men are formed according to the image of God, and educated in the world to the hope of a happy eternity.

*Who justifies the uncircumcision* — The apostle, when he says some are justified *by* faith, and others *through* faith, seems to have been pleased with a variety of expression in pointing out the same truth, with a view to have a passing stroke at the folly of the Jews, who imagined a distinction between themselves and the Gentiles, while there was not the smallest difference in the cause of justification. For if men are made partakers of this grace by faith alone, and faith is the same in both, it is ridiculous to make a distinction in so great a similitude. In my opinion, the apostle uses the word ironically, in the following sense: If there must be a difference between the Jew and Gentile, it is this,—the Gentile obtains righteousness through faith, and the Jew by faith. Unless the following distinction be preferred: The Jews are justified by faith, because they are born heirs of grace, while the right of adoption is transmitted from the fathers to them; but the Gentiles, through faith, because the covenant with respect to them is adventitious.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

*Do we then make void*—When the law is opposed to faith, the flesh immediately seizes on this as a plea for cherishing some suspicion of contrariety between them, as if they were opposed to each other. But this false imagination particularly gains an easy access to the minds of such as are deeply tinctured

with a false view of the law, who, neglecting the promises, seek only in it the righteousness of works. On this account the Jews severely attacked both Paul and our Lord himself, as if all his preaching aimed at the abrogation of the law. Hence his declaration, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil." (Matt. v. 17.) This suspicion extended also both to the moral and ceremonial law; for since the gospel puts an end to the ceremonies of Moses, its object is considered to be the destruction of his ministry. Besides, since the gospel blots out all righteousness of works, it is believed to be opposed to all those testimonies of the law in which the Lord affirms he has there prescribed the way of righteousness and salvation. I consider this defence of Paul to relate neither to the ceremonies particularly, nor to the moral precepts, as they are termed, but to the whole law, which he regards universally. For the moral law is truly confirmed and established by faith, since it was passed for this very purpose, to bring man, when acquainted with his sins, to Christ, without whom it is not performed itself. The law in vain proclaims what is to be done, while it accomplishes nothing else but an increased excitement of inordinate desires, and, finally, by this means aggravates the condemnation of sinful man. When, however, we come to Christ, the exact righteousness of the law is first found in him, which also becomes ours by imputation; in the next place, sanctification is acquired, by which our hearts are formed to the observance of the law; and though this is imperfect, yet we still keep our eye fixed upon the law, as the mark we aim at in our obedience. The same view is to be taken of the ceremonies, which cease indeed and vanish on the coming of Christ, but are truly confirmed by himself. For they are vain and shadowy images, considered only by themselves, and

will then be found to have something solid and substantial, when they have respect and are directed to a better and nobler end. The doctrine by which we teach, that the ceremonies have attained their true fulfilment in Christ, is their highest confirmation. Let us, therefore, so remember to dispense the gospel, as to establish the law by our plan of teaching, but let it be supported by no other strength than by faith in Christ.

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## CHAPTER IV.

1 **W**HAT shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found ? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory, but not before God. 3 For what saith the scripture ? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

*What then*—He confirms his reasoning by an example, which is sufficiently conclusive, since all points both in the subject and person are similar. For he is the father of the faithful, to whom we ought all to be conformed, and there are no more methods than one by which we can all attain righteousness. This precedent would not be sufficient as a common rule in many other subjects ; but since, in the person of Abraham, a mirror, or pattern, has been proposed of that righteousness which belongs in common to the whole church, Paul, with good reason, accommodates to the whole body of believers what had been written concerning the father of the faithful alone. This instance is, at the same time, binding upon the Jews, who had no more plausible

cause for glorying than to boast in themselves as the children of Abraham; and they would never have so much presumption as to ascribe to themselves more sanctity than to the holy patriarch. When it is now established beyond all doubt, that the friend of God was gratuitously justified, his posterity, who claim for themselves their own righteousness by the law, overcome by a sense of modesty, must necessarily be silent. *According to the flesh*—Some interpreters, induced by the structure of the sentence in the Greek, consider the question to be proposed in the following manner: “What, *according to the flesh*, namely, naturally or of himself, has Abraham attained?” It is probably joined to *father* as an epithet, for we are generally not only more affected by domestic examples; but the dignity of the race, in which the Jews boasted too much, is again particularly brought to view. Some consider it added by way of contempt, as in another passage those sons of Abraham are called *carnal*, who are not spiritual, or truly legitimate. I think this epithet expressed what peculiarly belonged to the Jews, because it was more honourable to be the children of Abraham by nature, and carnal descent, than by adoption alone, provided, at the same time, they enjoyed faith. He grants the Jews to have a nearer bond of union, that he may only prevail the more on them not to depart from the example of their father.

*For if Abraham*—The reasoning is incomplete, which ought to form the following syllogism: If Abraham was justified by works, he can boast in his own merit; but he has no cause to boast before God; therefore, he is not justified by works. *But not before God* is the minor proposition of the syllogism. The conclusion which I have given, though Paul has suppressed it, ought to be joined to the minor. He calls it boasting, when we can present

anything of our own, which, in the judgment of God, deserves to be rewarded. Which of us will dare to arrogate to himself a drop of merit, when it is not granted to Abraham ?

*For what says the scripture ?—It is a proof of the minor proposition or assumption, in which he denied Abraham to have no ground for boasting.* For if Abraham is justified because he embraces the goodness of God by faith, it follows that he has no cause for boasting, for he brings nothing of his own, save the acknowledgment of misery, which seeks for mercy ; since he takes it for granted that the righteousness of faith is a succour and place of refuge to the sinner destitute of works. For if there was any righteousness of law or works, it would reside in men themselves ; but they borrow by faith from some other person the supply which they want, and on this account it is properly denominated the imputed righteousness of faith. The place cited is taken from Genesis xv. 6, where the word *belief* ought not to be restricted to some particular saying, but the whole covenant of salvation and adoption of grace, which Abraham is said to have apprehended by faith. The promise of the future seed there stated was founded on gratuitous adoption. It deserves to be noticed, that salvation is not promised without the grace of God, nor divine grace without salvation ; and we are not called to the grace of God, nor hope of salvation, unless righteousness be at the same time offered. Having laid down this position, it is evident that the principles of theology are not understood by those who regard this testimony of Moses as violently wrested by Paul ; for since the promise is particular, they consider the believing patriarch to have acted in a right and proper manner, and to have so far been approved of by God. Their error consists in not perceiving faith to extend to the whole context,

and ought not, therefore, to be restricted to one member of the sentence. Their chief mistake arises from not beginning with the testimony of the grace of God. And God chiefly labours to make Abraham better acquainted with his own adoption and paternal favour, under which is comprehended eternal salvation by Christ. Wherefore Abraham by believing embraces nothing but the grace offered, lest it should be of none effect. If this is imputed to him for righteousness, it follows that he is righteous from no other cause, but the boldness with which he dares expect all things from God, in consequence of his reliance upon his heavenly Father. For Moses does not give an account of the opinion which men entertained of Abraham, but the estimation in which he was held before the tribunal of God. Abraham, therefore, apprehended the kindness of God offered to him in the promise, by which he perceived righteousness to be communicated. This relation between promise and faith is necessary to be understood for fixing the proper sense of justification, for the same state and condition exist between us and God, as, among lawyers, between the giver and the gift. For we attain righteousness, because as it is conveyed to us by the promise of the gospel, so we discern its possession by faith. How this passage may be reconciled with James, who appears, in some measure, to contradict it, has been mentioned above, and I will explain it, God willing, in James at greater length. We will only observe, that those to whom righteousness is imputed, are justified, since these two expressions are considered as synonymous by Paul, whence we infer, that the dispute is not, "what are the characters of men in themselves, but in what light does God view them." Not that purity of conscience and integrity of life are separated from the gratuitous favour of God, but because where the

reason is asked, why God loves and acknowledges us as just, Christ, who clothes us with his own righteousness, must necessarily start up in our mind, and occupy our attention.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

*Now to him that worketh*—He does not mean, by the person who works, a character devoted to all good works, which zeal ought to abound in all the sons of God, but who deserves something by his own merits ; and the person, in the same manner, who works not, is applied to a character who expects not to receive anything from the merit of works. For it is not his wish to find believers indolent, but he forbids only their acting as mercenaries, who demand something from God as their just due. And we have already stated, that the apostle is not considering the manner in which we ought to live, but the cause of salvation. And he argues from contraries, that God does not return us righteousness as a debt, but voluntarily bestows it. I agree with Bucer, who proves the form of arguing to be derived, not from one word, but the entire sentence, in the following manner : “ If a person deserves to receive anything by his work, it is paid him as a debt, not as gratuitously imputed.” Faith is reckoned for righteousness, not because it brings any merit to us, but apprehends the divine goodness. Righteousness, therefore, is not a debt owing us, but conferred gratuitously. Since, however, Christ justifies us by faith on our own earnest entreaty, Paul always regards in it the renouncing of ourselves. For what do we be-

lieve, except that Christ is our expiation to reconcile us to God? The same view is given in different language, Gal. iii. 11: "It is evident no man is justified by the law, for the just shall live by faith." The law, indeed, is not of faith, but he that doeth these actions shall live in them. For as the law promises a reward to works, Paul hence concludes that the righteousness of faith, which is gratuitous, does not agree with a righteousness of works, which will not take place, if faith justifies by a regard to works. These comparisons, which entirely remove all merit, ought carefully to be observed.

*But believeth on him*—The substance and nature both of faith and righteousness, have been fully and energetically expressed by this periphrastic statement. For it clearly defines that faith bestows righteousness upon us, not because it is meritorious, but obtains for us the grace of God. For it does not only call God the giver of righteousness, but condemns us for unrighteousness, that the liberality of God may assist our poverty. In fine, none but the person who is ungodly in himself, can attain to the righteousness of faith. For this circumlocution must be adapted to the circumstance of the passage, because faith adorns us with the righteousness of another, which, as a beggar, it supplicates and obtains from God. And here God is again said to justify us, while he pardons sinners gratuitously, and considers those worthy of his love, against whom he could justly display his wrath, while his mercy indeed removes our unrighteousness.

6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

*Describeth the blessedness of the man*—Hence we see the mere cavil of those who limit the works of the law within ceremonial rites, since what before were denominated works of the law are now called *works* simply, and without an adjunct. The simple and unrestricted language occurring in this passage, which all readers must understand as applying indifferently to every kind of work, must for ever conclude the whole of this dispute. For nothing is more inconsistent than to deprive ceremonies alone of the power of justifying, when Paul excludes works indefinitely. The opposite member of the sentence, that God justifies men by not imputing sin, deserves our attention, for this language proves Paul to make righteousness and the remission of sins to mean one and the same thing. This remission also is gratuitous, for it is imputed without works, which the word itself implies; for a debt is not remitted by paying it in full, but when the creditor, of his mere liberality and free will, cancels the obligation. What can we say of such as teach, that we ought to redeem the pardon of our sins by making satisfaction, while Paul derives an argument from the remission of our sins, to prove the gift of righteousness to be gratuitous? How can they agree with Paul? The pardon of sin, according to their view, is to be obtained by our works, satisfying the righteousness of God. But the righteousness of faith is here proved to be gratuitous, and without works, since it depends on the remission of sins. The reasoning would be invalid if any works were required in the forgiveness of our transgressions. The vain imaginations of the schoolmen concerning half remission are dispersed, when examined by the lan-

guage of David. The punishment is retained by God, according to their weak conceit, while the guilt of sin is forgiven ; but the Psalmist declares not only that their sins are concealed, and taken away in the presence of God, but he adds, they are not imputed. How can it be consistent for God to demand the punishment of sins which he does not impute ? We can still, therefore, retain the very beautiful sentence, " that faith justifies the person who is purified before God, by the gratuitous remission of sins." Hence also we may infer the perpetual continuance of gratuitous righteousness during our whole life. For when David, wearied by the long-continued anguish and torment of his own conscience, bursts forth into this exclamation, he certainly speaks from his own experience, and he had now worshipped God for many years. After great progress in holiness, he at last experienced the wretchedness of all who are summoned to the divine tribunal, and cried out, There is no other way of obtaining happiness than for the Lord to receive us into his favour by not imputing our sins. Thus the fanciful hypothesis is refuted of such as foolishly imagine justification by faith to be an initial act, by which believers afterwards retain that possession of righteousness by their works, which they have first secured without any merits of their own. The force of the opinion of Paul is not weakened, because works and other blessings are sometimes said to be imputed for righteousness. The Psalmist says, in the same sense, Psalm cxi. verse 30, that righteousness was imputed to Phinehas, the priest of the Lord, because he had executed judgment upon the transgressors, and avenged the disgrace of Israel. We have, indeed, heard of a human being, who has performed one righteous exploit, but we know one act alone does not justify a person. A perfect and complete obedience

in all its parts is required according to the promise, (Lev. xviii. 5,) "He that does these things shall live in them." How then is this vengeance imputed to Phinehas for righteousness? Certainly it was necessary for him, in the first place, to be justified by the grace of God. For such as are clothed with Christ's righteousness, not only find God kind and propitious to their persons, but to their works, whose blots and stains are covered by the purity of Christ, that they may not be laid to their account; hence their works, which are polluted by no corruption, are considered righteous. It is evident no work of man can be pleasing to God without such grace, favour, and indulgence. But if the righteousness of faith is the only cause why works are considered righteous, how weak is the reasoning of those who contend that righteousness is not of faith alone, because it is attributed to works! In answer to this, I adduce the following incontrovertible argument,—That all works would be condemned for unrighteousness, unless man be justified by faith alone. The same is true concerning the blessing of God; those are pronounced happy who fear the Lord, walk in his ways, (Psalm cxxviii. 1,) and meditate on his law day and night, (Psalm i. 2;) but since none perform this with such complete perfection as to fulfil the divine command, all blessings of this kind are vain, until we attain happiness by becoming purified and cleansed through the remission of our sins, in such a manner as to be rendered fit for that happiness which the Lord promises his servants on account of the zealous study of the law and good works. The righteousness of works, therefore, is the effect of the righteousness of faith; and happiness from works is the effect of the happiness which is placed in the remission of sins. If the cause neither ought nor can be destroyed by its effect, the conduct of those who study to destroy

the righteousness of faith by works, is unreasonable and inconsiderate. But some may argue, Why may we not produce these quotations to prove that man is justified and rendered happy by works? for the language of Scripture is as express that man is justified by works as by faith, and made blessed by the mercy of God. We ought here to consider both the order of causes and the dispensation of the grace of God; for since no declaration, either concerning the righteousness or happiness of works, has any effect, unless it has been preceded by this alone righteousness of faith, and has all its parts filled up and completed by this only, the necessity of erecting and establishing the latter is apparent, if we wish the former to grow and appear as fruit from the tree.

9 *Cometh* this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Because mention only is made of *circumcision* and *uncircumcision*, many ignorantly infer that the only question discussed is, the attainment of righteousness by legal ceremonies. But we ought to consider the class of men with whom Paul is disputing; for we know that hypocrites, while they boast of the merit of works, cast a disguise over their conduct by external masks. The Jews adopted a manner peculiarly their own, and were alienated from true and solid righteousness by gross abuse of the law. Paul said, that none obtain happiness but such as God reconciles to himself by gratuitous pardon; whence it follows that all are cursed whose works come into

judgment. This article of Christian faith is now determined, that men are justified, not by their own proper and intrinsic dignity, but by the mercy of God : even this is not sufficient, unless the remission of sins precedes all works ; and as circumcision was the first work, by which the Jewish people was initiated into the obedience of God, the apostle proceeds with his demonstration in this particular instance. Let us always remember that circumcision is considered, if I may be allowed the expression, as the initial work of legal righteousness. For the Jews did not boast in it as a sign of the grace of God, but as the meritorious observance of the law ; and they preferred themselves to others on the ground of their superior excellence before God. We now see that he is not disputing concerning one rite, but all legal works deserving of reward are included under this class ; and circumcision is particularly named, for it was the foundation of legal righteousness. But Paul, on the other hand, contends, if the righteousness of Abraham consists in the forgiveness of sin, which he safely assumes as granted, and the patriarch enjoyed this blessing before circumcision, it follows as a consequence, that remission of sins is not given to preceding merits. The argument you see is derived from the order of cause and effect, for the cause is always before the effect, and righteousness in Abraham preceded his circumcision.

11 And he received a sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised ; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised ; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also : 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who

also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which *he had* being yet uncircumcised.

*And he received a sign*—Paul anticipates and shows circumcision not to have been a vain and superfluous rite, though it did not justify, since it had another very excellent use, as its office consisted in sealing, and, as it were, ratifying the righteousness of faith. And, in the meantime, he hints from the very design of the rite that it was not the cause of righteousness. For he now proceeds to confirm the righteousness of faith, even that which had been procured in uncircumcision, and therefore detracts and derogates nothing from this grace. We have here also a remarkable passage concerning the common use of sacraments, for they are seals, as Paul testifies, by which the promises of God are in some way impressed upon our hearts, and the certainty of grace established. And though they afford no assistance of themselves, yet God, who willed to make them instruments of his grace, makes them useful in promoting the advancement of holiness in the elect by the secret operation and favour of his Spirit. And though they are only dead and useless figures to the reprobate, yet they continue always to retain their power and nature; for our unbelief, which deprives us of their effect, does not undermine or extinguish the truth of God. Wherefore let this remain fixed and determined, that the sacred symbols are testimonies by which God seals his grace upon our hearts. We ought peculiarly to state, that a twofold grace was represented by the sign of circumcision. God had promised Abraham a blessed seed, from whom salvation was to be expected by the whole world. The promise, (Genesis xvii. 7,) “I will be to thee a God,” depended on this. Gracious reconciliation in God was on this account

included in the sign of circumcision, and the like reason made it proper for the faithful to look to the promised Seed. God demanded in his turn integrity and holiness of life, and pointed out by the symbol how it might be acquired, namely, by the circumcision of every thing in man which is born in the flesh, for the whole nature is vitiated and corrupted. He instructed Abraham, therefore, by the external sign, to circumcise in a spiritual manner the corruption of his flesh, to which Moses alluded, Deut. x. 16. And to show it not to be the work of man, but God, he ordered the circumcision of tender infants, who were unable, by reason of their age, to perform the command. For Moses has expressly declared, that spiritual circumcision is a work of divine power, as is mentioned Deut. xxx. 6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." The prophets afterwards explained this much more plainly. Finally, there were two parts formerly of circumcision, as of baptism now, namely, to testify both newness of life and the forgiveness of sins. Moreover, because circumcision was after righteousness had taken place in the person of Abraham, the same order does not invariably take place in the sacraments, as appears in Isaac and his posterity; but God determined to give such an example from the beginning, that none might limit salvation to external things. *To be a father*—Observe how the circumcision of Abraham may confirm our faith concerning gratuitous righteousness, for it is the sealing of the righteousness of faith, that righteousness may be imputed to us also who believe. And Paul thus, by a happy artifice, retorts the objection upon his adversaries. For if what constitutes the truth and force of circumcision is found in uncircumcision, the Jews have no cause

to extol themselves so much above the Gentiles. But as a doubt might occur, ought not we, therefore, after the example of Abraham, to confirm the same righteousness by the seal of circumcision? Why has the apostle omitted it? Because he considered his remarks to have settled the question. For when the opinion had been received that circumcision was only of use to seal the grace of the Lord, its uselessness to us, who have a seal divinely appointed instead of it, is clearly established. Since, therefore, where baptism is established, no farther use for circumcision remains, he did not wish to enter into a useless dispute concerning a subject already determined, why the righteousness of faith is not sealed in the Gentiles, if they resemble Abraham. To believe in uncircumcision, signifies that the Gentiles, content with their situation, have not recourse to the sign of circumcision.

*To them who are not of the circumcision*—He here alludes to the carnal sons of Abraham, who, possessing only external circumcision, boast in it with great confidence. For they neglect the other and chief point, the imitation of the faith of Abraham, which alone had procured him salvation. It is hence apparent how careful he was to separate faith from the sacrament, with a view to suffer none to rest contented with the sign, independent of belief, as if sufficient for justification, and to show that the last alone can fill up all the parts required, and complete the whole. For while he acknowledges circumcised Jews to be justified, he makes a distinct exception of their following the example of Abraham by pure naked faith. For what is intended by faith in uncircumcision, except to show that it alone, without any other assistance, is sufficient? We must strictly avoid dividing it into two parts, lest we confound the two causes of justification. The scholastic opi-

nion, by which the sacraments of the Old and New Testament are distinguished, is refuted in the same way ; for they deny the power of justification to reside in the former, but ascribe it to the latter. If, however, Paul reasons correctly when he proves circumcision not to justify, because Abraham was justified by faith, the same argument is also conclusive in our case, when we assert baptism does not justify men, since they are justified by the same faith as that of Abraham.

13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

*For the promise was not*—He now repeats more distinctly the antithesis between the law and faith, to which he had already alluded ; and it is carefully to be observed, for if faith borrows nothing from the law for justification, we hence learn, that it has respect only to the mercy of God. The hypothesis of such as wish to confine this to ceremonial observances is easily refuted, for if works conduced any thing to justification, we ought rather to confine them to the law of nature than of Moses. Paul, however, does not oppose spiritual holiness of life to ceremonies, but to faith and its righteousness. The sum, therefore, is, that the inheritance had been promised to Abraham, not because he merited it by the observance of the law, but obtained righteousness by faith. And, certainly, as Paul will afterwards add, consciences at last enjoy a firm and solid peace, when they feel it to be a gratuitous gift, and not a legal debt. One common benefit, therefore, is evidently enjoyed by Gentiles and Jews, and the cause of it equally belongs to both. For if the salvation of men is founded on the goodness of God alone, such as

exclude the Gentiles from it, restrict and impede to the utmost of their power its regular course. *That he might be the heir of the world*—The apostle, who is treating in this passage of eternal salvation, seems to transfer, unseasonably, his readers to the world ; but in general he comprehends under this expression the renewal which we have cause to expect from Christ. The restoration of the life of believers was the chief object, but the collapsed state of the whole world required reparation. The apostle, therefore, (Heb. i. 2,) calls Christ the heir of all the divine blessings, because the adoption, which we have procured by his grace, has restored to us the possession of the inheritance from which we fell in Adam. But since, under the type of the land of Canaan, not only the hope of a heavenly life was offered to Abraham, but the full and solid blessing of God, the apostle teaches us that the dominion of the world was justly promised the father of the faithful. The pious enjoy a certain taste of this in the present life, for however frequently they may be pinched by the straits of want, yet, because they partake of the creatures formed by God for their use with a calm conscience, and enjoy earthly blessings from the hands of a propitious, willing, and kind Father, as pledges and earngests of eternal life, their poverty does not prevent them from acknowledging heaven, earth, and sea, to be their right. The wicked, though they swallow up the riches of the world, can call nothing their own ; nay, they rather snatch them by stealth, for they usurp them with the curse of God. The pious feel it a great solace in the midst of their destitution, that while they live sparingly, nothing is stolen from others ; but they receive their lawful allowance at the hand of their heavenly Father, until they shall discern the full possession of their inheritance, while all creatures will be subservient to

their glory. For both earth and heaven will be renewed for this express purpose, that they may enjoy a share, according to their measure, in adorning the splendour of the kingdom of God.

14 For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.

15 Because the law worketh wrath : for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

*For if they which are of the law*—The apostle argues from the impossibility or absurdity of the supposition, that the grace which Abraham obtained from his heavenly Father, had not been promised him by legal compact, or from a consideration of his works ; for if this had been laid down as a condition, that God regarded those only as worthy of adoption who obtained it by merit, or performed the law, none would then have had the courage and confidence of his being an heir of God. For who is conscious to himself of such perfection as to determine the inheritance to be his due by the justice of the law? His faith, therefore, would be destroyed ; for not only would the impossibility of the condition keep their minds in a state of suspense, anxiety, and perplexity, but cast them into great fear and trembling ; the effects of the promises would vanish, because they are only useful when received by faith. If our adversaries would direct all their attention to this one reason, they would not find it difficult to settle the controversy. The apostle pre-supposes it as a matter of certainty, that the promises of God lose all their efficacy if we do not receive them with sure confidence of mind. What would be the result, if the salvation of men were founded on the observance of the law? Our consciences would enjoy

no certainty, but, harassed with unceasing disquiet, would at last sink down in despair. The promise itself, should its fulfilment depend on an impossibility, would from this very cause vanish, without producing any fruit. Away now with those who teach the miserable people to procure salvation by works, since Paul expressly declares the promise is abolished, if it rests on works. But it is particularly necessary to know that faith, if maintained by works, is reduced to nothing. For we hence learn what faith is, and the character of the righteousness of those works in which men can safely confide. The apostle teaches us that faith perishes, if our mind does not securely rest in the goodness of God. Faith, therefore, is not the mere acknowledgment either of God or of his truth; it is not, indeed, the simple persuasion that there is a God, that his word is truth, but a certain knowledge of divine mercy conceived from the gospel, which can secure peace and rest of conscience with the God of love. The sum, therefore, is, that if the observance of the law is the foundation on which salvation rests, the mind will not be able to enjoy any confidence in it; nay, all the promises offered us by God will prove vain and ineffectual. Thus we shall be left in a deplorable and ruined state, if we are referred to works, while the cause and certainty of faith is the object of our search.

*Because the law worketh wrath*—A confirmation of the last sentence, from the contrary effect of the law; for since it produceth nothing but vengeance and punishment, grace cannot arise from this source. The law would, indeed, point out the way of life to men of virtue and integrity; but as the vicious and corrupt are commanded to perform their duty, without being supplied with powers to enable them to observe its precepts, the guilty would stand accused

and condemned by its sentence before the tribunal of God. For such is the vicious character of our nature, that the more we are taught what rectitude and justice are, the more openly is our iniquity, and particularly our obstinacy detected ; and in this way the judgment of God falls with greater severity on the guilty. I understand *wrath* to mean the judgment of God, which is the frequent sense of this word. Such as explain the wrath of the sinner to be inflamed by the law, because he hates and curses the Lawgiver, whom he sees opposed to his desires, reason with great acuteness ; but their arguments are altogether irrelevant to the present passage. For the common use of the term, and the reason afterwards assigned, clearly prove that Paul meant nothing else than the alone condemnation to which we are all immediately subjected by the law. *Where there is no law*—This is the second proof by which he confirms what he had said. For an obscurity would have rested upon the manner by which the wrath of God was inflamed against us by the law, had not the reason been made more apparent ; because, on our becoming acquainted with the righteousness of God by the law, we sin more grievously against him, in proportion as we have less excuse to offer in our defence. For the despisers of the known will of God deservedly suffer a severer punishment than ignorant offenders. The apostle does not speak of the simple transgression of righteousness, from which none is exempted ; but transgression, in his acceptation of the term, means that the sinner, when his mind has been made acquainted with the pleasure and displeasure of God, knowingly and willingly breaks through the boundaries prescribed by the voice of the Most High. And, in one word, transgression in this passage is not a simple offence, but means a determined obstinacy in the violation of

righteousness. The sense, whether the particle be taken adverbially, as I do, because more commonly received, and more consistent with the context, or as a relative pronoun, remains the same; namely, an offender, who is unacquainted with the written law, is not guilty of so great a transgression as the obstinate breaker and despiser of the divine law stands convicted of, when placed before the bar of infinite justice.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* of grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed: not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which <sup>were</sup> be not as though they were.

*Therefore it is of faith*—The completion of the argument may be summed up in the following manner: If we become heirs of salvation by works, its faith will be undermined, and promise destroyed; but the certainty of both these gifts is undoubted, and we, therefore, obtain by faith, that the stability of our inheritance, founded on the alone goodness of God, may produce an undoubted effect. See how the apostle, estimating faith by its firm and unshaken certainty and assurance, considers hesitation and doubt as disbelief, by which faith may be abolished, and the promise be rendered ineffectual. This doubt, however, is denominated by the schoolmen moral certainty, and, if God pleases, is substituted by them for faith. *That it might be of grace*—Here

first the apostle shows mere grace, and nothing else, to be proposed to faith, and that this is its object. For if it had a regard to merits, the inference of the apostle, by which he establishes the gratuitous nature of every blessing obtained for us by faith, would be false. I will repeat it in other terms: If every thing procured for us by faith be grace, all consideration of works is laid aside. But the following passage more clearly removes all ambiguity, and shows that the firmness of the promise is then finally secured, when it rests on grace. For this expression of Paul confirms the state of doubt and uncertainty in which mankind are placed, while they rest on works, because they deprive themselves of the fruit of the promises. Hence, also, we may easily infer that grace does not mean, as some fancy, the gift of regeneration, but gratuitous favour; for as regeneration is never perfect, it would never be sufficient to quiet their minds, or of itself to ratify the promise. *Not to that only which is of the law*—This expression, applied in other places to the preposterous zealots of the law, who yield themselves up to its yoke, and boast in the confidence it inspires, simply means here the Jewish nation, to whom the law of the Lord had been given. For Paul in another place informs us, that such as are bound by the authority of the law, are liable to the curse, and their exclusion from the enjoyment of grace is, therefore, certain. He does not mean the servants of the law, who, devoted to the righteousness of works, renounce Christ; but Jews, who had been educated in the law, and afterwards embraced the gospel of Christ. This passage becomes plainer by resolving the sentence in the following manner: Not to those who are of the law, but to all imitators of the faith of Abraham, though they had not before enjoyed the law. *Who is the father of us all*—The relative,

in this place, has the force of the causal particle, for Paul wishes to prove the Gentiles to be partakers of the same grace, since they were taken into his seed by the same prophecy, which conveyed the inheritance to Abraham and his seed. For he is distinctly said to be the father not of one nation, but of many, by which the future propagation of grace is meant, which was at that time confined within the limits of Israel alone. For unless the promised blessing was extended also to them, they could not be reckoned in the posterity of Abraham. The past tense of the verb, by the common use of Scripture, denotes the certainty of the divine counsel. For though there was not the least appearance of such an event at that time, yet because the Lord had so decreed, Abraham is truly said to have been appointed the father of many nations. The testimony of Moses may be inclosed in a parenthesis, so that the sentence may thus be connected,—*who is the father of us all before him, whom he believed, even God.* For it was necessary to explain the form and kind of relationship, lest the Jews should boast too much of their lineal descent from the patriarch. *A father before God* means a spiritual father, who stands in that relationship to his people from the promise of God, and not from carnal descent.

*Whom he believed, who quickeneth the dead*—The very substance of the faith of Abraham is declared by this circumlocution, and it makes the transition easy from his example to that of the Gentiles. For he obtained the promise, which he heard from the mouth of the Lord by a wonderful way, since it was given without a sign. Seed was promised to the friend of God then dead, as if he had been fresh and active; so that it was necessary for him to raise his thoughts to the power of God, which quickeneth the dead. There is no absurdity, therefore, if the Gen-

tiles, in other respects dry and dead, are made partakers of the inheritance. For such as assert the Gentiles, on account of their deadness, to be incapable of grace, offer an insult to Abraham, whose faith was supported by the thought, that it makes no difference whether the person, called by the Lord to life, be dead or not, whose power can easily raise the dead, even in the act of speaking. Here, also, the universal vocation of the Gentiles is brought before us by a pattern and type, which graphically depict the beginning, not of our first nativity, but of our hope of a future life ; namely, our rising up from nothing, while we are called by the Lord. For whatever appearance we may present, there is not a single spark about us of any good, which can render us fit for the kingdom of God. For the best preparation for hearing the call of God, is our complete dying to ourselves. The condition of our vocation is the raising of the dead by the Lord ; hence his power gives being to those who are nothing. The word *calling* ought not to be limited to preaching, but, in the usual sense of Scripture, to raising from the dead, for the purpose of expressing more strongly the power of God, who, by a single nod, raises up whom he will to display his glory.

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

*Who against hope*—“ His faith continued,” such is the sense, if this reading be adopted, “when supported by no argument, nay, when opposed by all the principles of reasoning.” And nothing is more opposed to faith than the fixing of our minds on objects of sight, so that by steadily viewing these we may seek

a ground and occasion for hope. It may be read, and perhaps more properly, *above hope*, as if he had said his faith very much surpassed any conception he could form. For unless our faith flies upwards on heavenly wings, and looks down at a distance on all carnal feelings, it will always stick in the mire of the world. The word *hope*, when it first occurs in this sentence, means the argument for indulging hope, derived from nature and carnal reason ; *hope*, when it is met with a second time, implies faith given by God, when, all ground of hope failing, Abraham rested by faith on the promise of the Lord, and he considered this to be a sufficient ground for confidence, however incredible in itself the thing might appear. *According to that which was spoken*—Abraham, when many temptations induced him to despair, directed his attention to the promise, “Thy seed shall equal the stars of heaven, and the sands of the sea.” For Paul made an imperfect quotation, for the purpose of increasing our attention to the study of this part of the word of God. For the apostles, in all their citations of Scripture, are scrupulously careful to excite our more diligent perusal of the sacred records.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb : 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; 21 And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

*And being not weak in faith*—The passage may be

thus understood by omitting one negative, "nor did he, in the weakness of faith, consider his own body," but it has no effect on the sense. He now enters into a nearer demonstration of the circumstance, which might impede, nay, entirely prevent, Abraham from receiving the promise. Whatever he could see in or about himself was opposed to the effect which the promise was calculated to produce. He withdrew his attention from objects of sight, and, as it were, forgot himself, to leave room for divine truth to accomplish its object. He did not altogether overlook his body now dead, for Scripture testifies he thus reasoned with himself, "Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" but, because he totally omitted this view of the subject, and resigned all his reason to the Lord, the apostle says he did not consider such difficulties. And it afforded a proof of greater constancy to withdraw his attention from a subject, which, of its own accord, attracted his notice, than if his mind had never dwelt on such a topic. Both this passage, and the 17th and 18th of Genesis, clearly prove that the body of Abraham had been dead from age, before the blessing of the Lord; so that we cannot admit the opinion of St. Augustine, who, in some part of his writings, considers Sarah to have been the only impediment. Nor ought we to be influenced by the absurdity of the objection, which induced him to have recourse to this solution, for he considers it ridiculous to call Abraham dead when an hundred years old, who had many children born to him some years after. For God showed his power more visibly at that time, because he, who had before been like the trunk of a dry and withered tree, when he revived by a divine blessing, not only could beget Isaac, but, being restored to a vigorous age, was afterwards enabled to

add considerably to his family. Some may answer, It is not contrary to the course of nature for a person to beget children at that age. If I grant this to be no prodigy, it is almost a miracle. Consider also by what a variety of labours, of journeyings, of troubles, and difficulties, this holy man had been harassed during his whole life; and we must then grant he was not less decayed and exhausted by toils than broken down by old age. To conclude, his body is called dead, not simply, but by comparison, for it was not probable that one, who, in the flower and vigour of his life, had no family born to him, would have one now when his strength was so decayed. His not being *weak in faith* means, that he had not vacillated and fluctuated, as we generally do, when our affairs are in an uncertain state. A two-fold weakness attends faith, one which yields to the trials of adversity, and makes us fall away from the power of God; the other springs indeed from imperfection, but does not extinguish the power of faith. For however much the mind of the believer is illuminated, many remains of ignorance continue; however much his resolution is established, great distrust and doubt still cling to his character. Since the faithful, therefore, have to wage a constant warfare with ignorance and doubt, which are the vices of the flesh, their faith is often severely shaken, and suffers from the contest, but comes off at last completely victorious; hence, in weakness itself, they may justly be said to enjoy the greatest strength.

*He examined not into the promise of God by unbelief*—I consider this translation to be well founded, though I do not follow the ancient interpreter and Erasmus; for the apostle seems desirous to make the observation, that Abraham had not carefully examined with all the research of unbelief whether the Lord could accomplish his promise. A disqui-

sition into any subject properly takes place, when we free it from all uncertainty, and wish to admit no apparent credibility until it is thoroughly investigated. Abraham, indeed, like the Virgin Mary, when she inquired of the angel how his message would be accomplished, asked in what way it could happen, but it was the question of a person struck with wonder. Holy men, therefore, when intelligence is brought them concerning the greatness of the works of God, which exceed their comprehension, immediately break out into admiration ; but, from wonder, they soon pass on to look up with love and adoration to the power of God ; but the wicked mock even in their inquiries, and reject all as fabulous. The Jews proceed in this manner, when they ask how Christ can give his flesh to eat. Abraham, in the manner just now stated, has no blame attached to him on account of his laughter and inquiry, How a man, of an hundred years old, and a woman ninety, should have a son ? because, in his admiration, he yielded to the power of the divine word. Similar laughter and question, when proposed by Sarah, are censured in Scripture, because she accused the promise of God, and doubted it as vain. If these remarks are applied to the present subject, it will plainly appear, that the origin of the justification of Abraham and of the Gentiles was the same. The Jews offer an insult to their father, if they oppose the calling of the Gentiles as absurd. We ought likewise to remember, that we are all in the same condition with Abraham. Every thing belonging to us is opposed to the promises of God. He assures us of immortality ; we are surrounded with mortality and corruption. He declares that we are esteemed by him as just ; we ourselves are covered with sins. He testifies his propitious and benevolent feelings towards us ; external indications threaten

his wrath. What then ought we to do ? To shut our eyes, and to go past ourselves, and every thing belonging to us, that no impediment nor delay may occur to prevent us from giving credit to the veracity of God. *But was strong in faith*—It is opposed to the former part of the sentence, where it was said he was not weak in faith, and implies his victory over unbelief by the constancy and firmness of his faith ; for none can escape with triumph from this struggle, unless he borrows arms and strength from the word of God. We must observe, in the latter member of this passage, *giving glory to God*, that no greater honour can be conferred upon the Lord than by sealing his truth by our faith ; as, on the contrary, no greater insult can be shown the Author and Finisher of our salvation, than by rejecting his offered glory, or by derogating from the authority of his word. The chief article, therefore, in the worship of God, is to embrace his promises with obedience, and true religion begins with faith.

*And being fully persuaded that what he had promised*—Paul seems to say nothing extraordinary concerning the faith of Abraham, because all confess the power of God ; but experience shows that one of the most rare and difficult attainments is to ascribe to the power of God the honour which it justly claims. For there is no obstacle, however slight and trifling, which the flesh does not imagine sufficient to turn away the hand of God from performing his intended work. Hence the promises of God often slip away from us even on the least possible temptations. None, without dispute, as I have mentioned, denies the omnipotence of God ; the moment, however, any obstacle is presented, to impede the course of his promises, we degrade and dishonour the power of the Most High. We ought, therefore, to be fully convinced, if we desire the divine authority and

honour to possess their just sway over us, that the power of the Lord of Hosts is more able to overcome the obstacles of the world, to use a comparison, than the splendour of the sun to dispel and scatter the clouds which obscure its rays. We generally offer, as an excuse, that by our doubt concerning God's promises, nothing is derogated from his power, because, indeed, imagination can by no means supply us with a well-grounded cause for our doubt, which is in itself preposterous, and evidently blasphemous towards God, as it rests upon the supposition that our Almighty Parent makes more bountiful promises in his word than he is able to perform. But the defect which we feel is our own, nor do we sufficiently exalt the power of God if we do not consider him superior to our own vice. Faith, therefore, ought not to look to our weakness, our wretchedness, and our defect, but attend with our undivided care and zeal to the alone power of God. For if it depended on our own righteousness and dignity, it would never ascend to consider the righteousness of God. The examination of unbelief, recently mentioned, takes place when we measure the power of God by our own standard. For neither does faith imagine that God has power to accomplish his will, while, in the meantime, he sits at his ease, but rather places his power in a state of continual action, and has recourse particularly to the effect of his word, that the hand of God may be in a state of readiness to accomplish all the declarations of his lips.

*And therefore it was imputed to him*—Hence it is now more clearly evident why and how his faith has conferred righteousness on Abraham, because, resting on the word of God, he rejected not the promised grace; and the relation of faith to the word is to be carefully maintained, and committed to memory.

For faith can bestow no more upon us than it has received from the word. Therefore he will not be immediately righteous, who, impressed only with a general and confused knowledge, shall conclude that God is truth, but he must rest in the promise of grace.

23 Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

*Now it was not written*—Since the proof is not always conclusive from example, as we have above hinted, Paul, to prevent all doubt on this subject, expressly asserts, that a specimen of common righteousness had been afforded in the person of Abraham, which pertains equally to all. This passage instructs us how we ought to derive advantage from the examples in Scripture. The heathens said truly that history was the mistress of life, but none can make a safe progress in it as treated by heathen authors ; the Scriptures alone justly lay claim to this office. For, in the first place, the word of truth prescribes certain general rules, according to which we may examine each individual history to make it subservient to our progress in piety. In the second place, it clearly distinguishes actions, which we ought to take as a model for our conduct, from those which we ought to avoid. The history of the Bible is particularly engaged in affording us instruction concerning the providence of God, his righteousness and goodness towards his people, and his judgments against the reprobates. Paul asserts that the account of Abraham's life was not written merely on his own

account, for it is not a subject which relates to the individual calling of some certain person, but that method of obtaining righteousness is described which is one and unchanging among all believers ; and this is exhibited in the conduct of the common father of the faithful, towards whom the eyes of all ought to be directed. If, therefore, we wish to read the sacred historians with purity and piety, let us remember we ought to handle them in such a manner as to receive from them the advantage of solid learning. They instruct us how to form our life and conversation, how to confirm and strengthen our faith, and how to excite the fear of the Lord. The imitation of the saints will be useful to form our life and manners, if we learn from them sobriety, chastity, love, patience, modesty, contempt of the world, and other virtues. The assistance which God was always ready to afford his saints in former ages, will contribute to confirm our faith; and his unceasing protection, and fatherly care of them, will supply us with consolation in the trials of adversity. The judgments of God, and his punishments of the wicked, if they excite a reverential awe and deep sense of piety in our hearts, will afford us much assistance in our present pilgrimage. The apostle's statement, that it was not written for his sake alone, seems to intimate that it was in part written on his account ; and on this ground some understand Abraham's attainments by faith to have been mentioned to his honour, because the Lord wishes his servants to be had in everlasting remembrance, as Solomon says, (Prov. x. 7,) their name shall be blessed. May not this passage be understood in a sense more simple and agreeable to the context, as if Paul meant it not on Abraham's account only, which might imply some singular privilege, that could not afford an example for our benefit, but as supplying instruction for us

and all believers, who must be justified in the same way.

*If we believe on him*—We have already hinted at the use of these circumlocutions, which are inserted by Paul to give us different views according to the circumstances of the passages of the substance of our faith ; and here the apostle alludes to what is not the least important part of our belief, the resurrection, which is the subsistence and evidence of our future life. Had he simply said that we believe in God, it would not have been so easy for us to infer what assistance it could afford for the obtaining of righteousness ; but while he presents Christ to our attention, and offers us a certain pledge of life in his resurrection, the fountain undoubtedly appears from which the imputation of righteousness flows.

*Who was delivered*—He follows out and illustrates the doctrine, to which we have alluded, at greater length. For it is of great importance to us to have our minds not only directed to Christ, but to have a clear proof of the means by which he has procured our salvation. And though the Scripture, where it treats of our salvation, stops at the death of Christ alone, yet on this occasion the apostle proceeds further. For since it was his design to give a more explicit account of the cause of our salvation, he enumerates both parts of this great blessing. And, in the first place, he states that our sins were expiated by Christ's death, and righteousness was afterwards procured by his resurrection. The sum is, where we enjoy the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection, nothing is wanting to complete all the parts of righteousness. And there can be no doubt, that by separating the death of Christ from his resurrection, he accommodates his language to our ignorance ; for our righteousness, as is true in other respects, and the following chapter teaches, was procured for us by the

obedience which Christ exhibited at his death. But since the advantages conferred by Christ's death were manifested by his resurrection, this distinction is well calculated for teaching believers, that our salvation commenced with the sacrifice by which our sins were expiated, and was perfected by his resurrection. For our reconciliation to God is the commencement of righteousness; and the dominion of life, after death has been abolished, its fulfilment. Paul, therefore, intimates that satisfaction for our sins had been completed on the cross. For the destruction of our guilt, by Christ, was necessary that he might restore us to the Father's favour, and this could only be accomplished by undergoing the punishment in our stead, which we were unable to bear. "For the chastisement of our peace," says Isaiah, "was upon him." He uses the expression *delivered* rather than *died*, because expiation depends on the eternal good pleasure of God, who wished atonement to be made in this particular method. *Raised again for our justification*—For it would not have been sufficient for Christ to expose himself to the wrath and judgment of God, and to undergo the curse due to our sins, unless he had obtained a victory over the same, and, being received up into the glory of heaven, reconciled God to us by his intercession. The power of justification, which destroys death, is ascribed to the resurrection, not as if the sacrifice of the cross, by which we are reconciled to God, had contributed nothing to our righteousness, but because the perfection of this grace appears more distinctly in a new life. I cannot agree with such as refer this second part to newness of life, for the apostle had not yet begun to treat on this point; and it is also certain, that both members of the sentence relate to the same subject. If justification, therefore, signifies newness of life, the meaning of

his dying for our sins would have been, that he might acquire for us the grace of mortifying the flesh,—a sense which all reject. As, therefore, Paul said Christ died on account of sins, because, after paying the punishment of sins by his death, he hath freed us from the calamity of death, so he is now said to have been raised again to our justification, since he has firmly renewed our life by his resurrection. For he was first struck by the hand of God to discharge the misery due to sin in the person of the transgressor; and afterwards exalted to the kingdom of life, to present his people with righteousness and life. Thus far, therefore, he treats of imputed righteousness, which will be confirmed by the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER V.

1 Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:  
2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

*Being justified therefore*—The apostle begins by illustrating from effects his former assertion concerning the righteousness of faith. This whole chapter consists in amplifications, which are no less powerful in explaining than confirming the doctrine of the apostle. For he had before said, that faith is abolished, if righteousness is sought by works; for wretched souls, that can find nothing solid in themselves, will be disturbed by constant want of rest. He now, on the other hand, teaches us that our

souls are rendered quiet and tranquil, when we have obtained justification by faith. *We have peace*—A singular fruit of the righteousness of faith. For every desire to seek for security of conscience by works, as is apparent in profane and ignorant characters, will be unsuccessful. For the breast is either lulled to rest by the contempt or oblivion of the divine judgment, or is full of fear and trembling until it has leaned on Christ, for he alone is peace. Serenity of conscience, therefore, is peace; which arises from feeling God to be reconciled to us in Christ. Neither the pharisee, inflated by a false confidence in his works, nor the stupid sinner, intebriated by the sweetness of his vices, enjoys this tranquillity of mind. For though neither of these seems to be at open war with the Lord, as a person struck with a sense of sin feels himself to be, yet, because they do not truly assent to the judgment of God, they experience no harmony and union with him; for a stupid state of conscience implies in itself an undoubted departure, as it were, from God. Peace, therefore, towards God is opposed to the drunken security of the flesh, since the rousing of themselves to give an account of their mode of living, is the first point to which their attention ought to be directed. No one indeed can stand before God without fear, unless he relies, with confidence, on gratuitous reconciliation; because, while a Being of infinite holiness is considered to be our Judge, all men must be affected with terror and dismay. This affords the strongest argument that our adversaries only prate at their ease under the shade, when they arrogantly lay claim to righteousness by works. For the conclusion which is deduced by Paul depends on this principle,—that wretched souls are always in a state of doubt if they do not rest on the grace of Christ.

*By whom also we have access*—For our reconciliation with God is supported by Christ; for he alone is the beloved Son of the Most High, and we are all by nature the children of wrath. But this grace is communicated to us by the gospel, for it is the ministry of reconciliation, by the favour of which we are in some measure introduced into the kingdom of God. Paul, therefore, hath deservedly presented to our view, in Christ, a certain pledge of the grace of God, that he may withdraw us, in a more effectual manner, from the confidence of works. And the word *access* implies that salvation commences with Christ, who meets, as it were, the undeserving, and stretches forth his hand for their deliverance, to the exclusion of all preparations, by which foolish men conceive themselves to anticipate the mercy of God. The continuance of the same grace, Paul afterwards immediately subjoins, is our security for the firmness and stability of our salvation; and our perseverance, as he hints, is not founded on our own virtue or industry, but on Christ. When, however, the apostle speaks, at the same time, of our standing, he intimates how deeply the gospel ought to be rooted in the hearts of believers; that, being strengthened by its truth, they may continue firm and unshaken against all the machinations of the devil and the flesh. Our standing in grace, by faith, implies that our belief is not the fleeting persuasion of a day, but so fixed and deeply seated in our minds as to continue during our whole lives. The person, therefore, who is impelled by a sudden impulse to believe, has not such a faith as entitles him to be reckoned among believers; but he who, with a constant and unfaltering steadfastness, remains so fixed and settled in the station divinely appointed him, as always to adhere to Christ his Saviour. *And we glory in hope*—Hence, therefore, the hope of a future life manifests itself,

and dares to exult and glory, because the foundations on which we stand rest on the glory of God. For, according to the apostle, though the faithful are now wanderers and pilgrims on earth, yet their confidence raises them so far above the heavens as to make them cherish in their bosoms, with calmness and tranquillity, the hope of their future inheritance. And this passage entirely overthrows the two very ruinous and pestilential opinions of the sophists. Christians, according to one of these opinions, are commanded to rest satisfied with a mere moral conjecture in perceiving the manifestation of God's grace towards themselves. The other maintains, that all are left in a state of uncertainty concerning final perseverance. Was, however, our knowledge at present uncertain, and our persuasion, with respect to the future, doubtful and hesitating, who would have courage to glory? The hope of the glory of God hath shone upon us by the gospel, which testifies that we shall be made partakers of the divine nature. (2 Pet. i. 4.) For when we shall see God face to face we shall be like him. (1 John iii. 2.)

3 And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also : knowing that tribulation worketh patience ;  
4 And patience, experience ; and experience, hope :  
5 And hope maketh not ashamed ; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

*And not only so*—Paul anticipates the objection, which some might deridingly propose, that Christians, notwithstanding all their glory, are in this world harassed and wearied in a surprising manner, which is a condition the very reverse of bliss ; and in answer, he declares, that the calamities of the

pious, so far from impeding their enjoyment of happiness, contribute to promote the advancement of their glory. He reasons in establishing this proof from the effect, and uses an elegant climax with which he finally concludes, to show that all the afflictions we at present suffer tend to our salvation and happiness. And we must not understand his expression of the saints glorying in their tribulations, as if they did not fear and fly from affliction, or were not sore pressed with its keen blasts when they are overtaken by the howling tempest of adversity; for no patience would result from such trials, if they did not feel a bitterness; but they are properly said to glory, because, in the midst of their grief and sorrows, they experience great consolation, which they consider to be dispensed by the hand of their most indulgent Parent for good, during all their sufferings. For they have always sufficient ground for glorying, where their salvation is promoted and advanced. Hence, therefore, we are taught the design of our tribulations, if we are desirous to be considered as the sons of God. For they ought to accustom us to patience; and, if this is not accomplished, our vileness renders the work of God again ineffectual. For whence does he prove adversity not to be opposed to the glory of the pious, but because by their patience in enduring they feel the assistance of God, which supports and confirms their hope? It is certain, therefore, that all persons who do not learn patience are making a bad progress in the divine life. Nor do the complaints of the saints in Scripture, which are full of despair, form any objection against this view. For, occasionally at least, God so presses and straitens his people, as scarcely to allow them a breathing time, or the remembrance of their consolation; but in a moment he restores those to life, whom he had almost overwhelmed in the darkness of death. Thus

the expression of Paul (2 Cor. iv. 8) is always fulfilled in them—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." *Tribulation worketh patience*—This does not proceed from the nature of tribulation, by which we see a large portion of mankind excited to rail against, and even to curse God. But when inward meekness, infused by the Spirit of God, and comfort, suggested by the same, have succeeded in the place of stubbornness and obstinacy, tribulations, which in the obstinate and refractory can only excite indignation and fretting, become the instruments of generating patience in believers.

*Patience, experience*—James, in a similar climax, seems to follow a different order, for he says, "experience worketh patience;" but these two apostles may be reconciled by understanding the words to be taken in a different meaning. For Paul means by *experience*, the certain protection of God which the faithful enjoy, when, confiding in his assistance, they overcome all difficulties. They experience, indeed, the greatness of the divine power as long as they continue firm in bearing with patience; which aid, according to his promise, will always be present with his people. The passage in James, according to the usual acceptation of the word in Scripture, relates to tribulations, because God proves and tries his servants by these; and hence they are often denominated temptations. With respect to the present passage, our progress in patience is such as becomes the character of a Christian, when we consider our perseverance in this duty to arise from the power of God, and thus for the future entertain a hope that we shall never want his grace, which has always afforded us assistance in necessity. Paul, therefore, subjoins, that hope arises from experience, because we are ungrate-

ful after receiving benefits, if we do not confirm our hope for the future by calling them to remembrance.

*Hope maketh not ashamed*—Has a most certain effect upon our salvation. Hence, we are evidently tried with afflictions by the Lord for the very purpose of using these as steps to promote the advancement of our salvation. Those troubles, therefore, cannot render us wretched, which in their own way are the supports of our happiness. He has thus established his position, that the pious have ground for glorying in the midst of their afflictions. *For the love of God*—I do not refer to the last word only, but to the whole of the preceding sentence ; we are, I say, improved by tribulations for performing the duty of patience ; and patience affords us a proof of the divine assistance by which we are more emboldened and encouraged to hope ; for much as we may be troubled and seem wearied out, yet we cease not to feel the divine kindness towards us, which is the most abundant consolation, and much greater than if prosperity attended all our undertakings. Since as what appears to be happiness is misery itself, when the wrath and opposition of God are arrayed against us, so our very calamities will undoubtedly terminate in prosperity and joyful success, if our heavenly Father be propitious. Since all things must be subservient to the will of our Creator, who, according to his fatherly favour towards us, as Paul again repeats, (chap. viii.,) orders and tempers all the trials of the cross for our own salvation. This knowledge of the divine love towards us is instilled into our hearts by the Spirit of God : “ For neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the blessings God hath prepared for such as worship him ;” the Spirit alone can reveal these things. The participle, *shed abroad*, is very emphatic ; for it signifies, that the revelation

of divine love to us is so abundant as to fill our hearts. And this being poured forth upon every part of our character and feelings, not only mitigates our sorrow in adversity, but sweetly seasons and gives a loveliness even to our tribulations. He says, also, this Spirit is bestowed merely by the gratuitous goodness of God, and not paid as a recompense to our merits. Augustine has indeed made this excellent remark, though he mistakes in explaining the love of God in an active sense, as if we endure adversity with constancy, and are thus confirmed in our hope, because, being regenerated by his Spirit, we love God. This is a pious sentiment, but wholly foreign from Paul's view of the passage. For love is here taken in a passive sense, and the apostle, undoubtedly, teaches us that the real genuine fountain of all charity is the persuasion, which the faithful experience, of the love entertained by God for them ; nor are they merely tinctured in a slight degree, but have their minds completely replenished and anointed with this conviction.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

*For when we were yet without strength—I could not allow myself to translate this sentence according to the time wherein we were weak,* though this meaning corresponds more with my own view of the passage. The argument from the greater to the less, •

which will be afterwards prosecuted at greater length, begins here ; and though the thread of the discourse is not very distinctly preserved, yet the irregularity of the structure will not perplex the sense of the whole. If, the apostle says, Christ pitied the wicked, if he reconciled his enemies to the Father, and accomplished all this by virtue of his death, he will now, with much more ease, secure the salvation of such as are justified, and preserve in grace those who have experienced its enjoyment ; especially as the power of the endless life of our Saviour is now added to his death. Some understand the time of weakness to mean the period when Christ first began to be manifested to the world, and consider men to have been called weak at that period, because they resembled children, in consequence of being kept under the tutelage of the law. This passage, in my opinion, relates to every individual believer, and *time* denotes the period which preceded the reconciliation of the saints with God. For we are born the children of wrath, and continue under that curse until we are made partakers of Christ. He calls those weak who are a mass of nothing but vice, for, in this same verse, he denominates them ungodly. Nor is this a novel sense of the term *weakness*, since the apostle (1 Cor. xii. 22) calls the less honourable parts of the body weak, and (2 Cor. x. 10) his bodily presence weak, which is not distinguished for dignity. This meaning will occur more frequently a little farther on. Christ died for the wicked, when we were in a state of weakness, and by no means worthy or fit to be regarded by God, because faith is the beginning of piety, from which all those, for whom he died, were alienated. The same remark applies to the ancient patriarchs, who obtained righteousness before the death of Christ, for they secured this benefit from his death, which was determined to take place at a future period.

*For scarcely for a righteous man*—The particle *for* must be taken in an affirmative or declarative sense, and the following is the meaning of the apostle: “It is a very rare example among men to find any person ready to die for the just, which, however, may sometimes happen. Granting this occasionally to be the case, none will ever be found ready to die for the wicked, as Christ did.” The comparison heightens the greatness of the blessing, since there does not exist among mankind such an example of benevolence as Christ exhibited on our account.

*And God commends*—I translate the verb *confirms*; for the object of the apostle is not to excite us to thankfulness, but to establish the confidence and security of our souls. He confirms, therefore, or, in other words, declares his love towards us to be most certain and firm, because he had not spared his Son Jesus Christ for the sake of the wicked. And in this his love appears, that, not induced by our love, he first loved us of his own accord, as John states, John iii. 16. The word *sinners*, as in many other places, means such as are wholly devoted to vice, and abandoned to sin. (John ix. 31;) God “heareth not sinners,” namely, wicked and infamous characters. The woman who was a sinner (Luke vii. 37) implies one of the most dissolute habits. The following antithetic part of the passage, *being justified by his blood*, proves this more clearly. For as the two characters are opposed to each other, and those are termed justified, who are freed from the guilt of sin, the consequence necessarily follows, that *sinners* mean such as are condemned for their crimes. This is the sum of the whole: “If Christ hath acquired righteousness for sinners by his death, he will now much more protect them when justified from ruin and destruction.” And in this latter mem-

ber of the sentence, he applies to his doctrine the comparison of less and greater. For it would not have been sufficient that Christ had once secured salvation for us, unless he had ensured and confirmed the same to the very last. And the apostle now contends we have no cause for fearing lest Christ break off and leave us in the midst of our course, and in the career of his grace ; for such is our condition, since we were reconciled by him to the Father, that he is desirous to exert his grace towards us with more efficacy, and to increase it every day.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

The former opinion is here explained and amplified, by comparing Christ's life and death. Christ presented himself as a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father, when we were his enemies. We are now made friends by his reconciliation ; and if this was accomplished by his death, the power and efficacy of his life will be much greater. We have, therefore, ample proofs to confirm our minds in the confidence of our salvation. Christ, by his death, according to Paul, reconciled us to God, because he was an expiatory sacrifice by which atonement was made to God for the world, as I have shown in the fourth chapter. The apostle seems in this passage to contradict himself, for, if the death of Christ was a pledge of divine love towards us, the consequence necessarily follows, that we were even then acceptable to him ; but he now says we were his enemies. I answer, because God hates sin, we also are hated by him in our character as sinners ; but he ceases to hate us, forasmuch as he adopts us into the body of Christ

by his secret counsel. Our return to grace is, however, unknown to us, until we attain it by faith. With respect to ourselves, therefore, we are always enemies until the death of Christ intercedes to make God propitious. And this distinction, by which we are regarded in a two-fold point of view, demands our attention. For we acknowledge this mercy of God to be no otherwise gratuitous than by its being evident that he had not spared his only-begotten Son, for he loved us when a disagreement existed between us and our heavenly Father. Again, we do not sufficiently feel a kindness to have been conferred upon us by the death of Christ, unless this is the commencement of our reconciliation with God, so as to be convinced that our heavenly Preserver, who before was our enemy, has become propitious since the expiation was accomplished. When, therefore, the death of Christ is assigned as the cause of our being received into favour, the meaning is, that the guilt to which we were otherwise liable has been removed.

11 And not only *so*, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

*And not only so*—He now goes to the highest degree of boasting. For while we glory in God as ours, every blessing which our imagination can conceive, or desire, or wish, is obtained and flows from this fountain. For God is not only the highest of all our blessings, but he contains also in himself the sum and substance, as well as all the individual and constituent parts of happiness, and he is made ours by Christ. We have, therefore, attained such a point by the blessing of faith, as to possess every thing

necessary for our felicity. Nor does he frequently inculcate reconciliation without a cause : that, first, we may learn to keep our eyes fixed upon the death of Christ, whenever our personal salvation is concerned ; and, in the second place, know that our confidence is to be placed in nothing else than the expiation of our sins.

12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned : 13 (For until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

*Wherefore, as—* He now begins to enlarge the same doctrine by comparing two contrary subjects. For if the object of Christ's coming was to redeem us from the ruin into which Adam had fallen, and hurled all his posterity headlong, as well as himself, we cannot more distinctly perceive our possessions in Christ than by a clear proof of our loss in Adam, though the comparison is not in every respect similar. On this account Paul subjoins a correction, as will appear in its proper place, and we will also point out the difference in this comparison. This reasoning is rendered in some measure obscure, for want of connexion, since the second part in the comparison, which corresponds to the first, is not expressed. We will study to make both plain by our remarks on the passage. *Sin entered into the world* —Observe the order followed by Paul, for he says sin preceded, which was followed by death. Some

contend our ruin to be effected in such a manner by the sin of Adam, that we perish, not from any fault of our own, but merely because our first father had, as it were, sinned for us. Paul, however, expressly affirms that sin is propagated to all those who suffer punishment on its account. And the apostle presses this still closer, when shortly after he assigns a reason why all the posterity of Adam is subject to the power of death, namely, because we have all sinned. To sin, therefore, is to be corrupt and vicious, for the natural depravity which we bring from our mother's womb, though it does not so soon produce its effects, is still, however, sin in the presence of the Lord, and deserves his punishment. This is what divines call original sin. For as Adam, at his first creation, had received the gifts of divine grace for his posterity, as well as himself, so on departing from the Lord he corrupted, vitiated, depraved, ruined our nature in himself; for being deprived of the image of God, he could only produce a seed resembling himself. We have, therefore, all sinned, because we are all imbued with natural corruption; on which account we are wicked and perverse. For the Pelagians formerly endeavoured to avoid the force of the language of Paul, by frivolously supposing sin to be diffused by imitation from Adam to the whole race, since, according to this statement, Christ would only be an example, not a cause of righteousness. The inference is also plain that the apostle does not treat of actual sin, for if every person was the cause of his own guilt, why should Paul compare Adam with Christ? It follows, therefore, that our depravity here alluded to is innate and hereditary.

Until the law—Paul anticipates an objection by this parenthesis, for since there does not appear to be transgression without the law, it might be doubted whether sin existed before the law. There could be

no doubt of its existing after that period, and the only difficulty was concerning the time preceding the law. Paul, therefore, answers, though God had never passed sentence by a written law, the human race would still have been cursed, even from the womb. Such characters as spent a wicked and abandoned life, before the law was promulgated, could by no means be freed from the condemnation of sin, for there was always a God to whom worship was due, and there always existed some rule and standard of righteousness. This plain and clear explanation affords, of itself, a sufficient answer to contrary interpretations. *But sin is not imputed—* We slumber, as it were, over our sins, if not rebuked by the law. And though we are acquainted with our evil actions, yet we bury to the utmost of our power, or at least destroy, by sudden oblivion, the knowledge of sin, which intrudes itself upon our notice; while the law convicts, rebukes, and, as it were, rouses us, by chiding our conduct, that we may afterward return and reflect upon God's judgments. The apostle, therefore, intimates the perverse character of men to be so great, as to indulge in sin with security and pleasure, when not excited by the law, and to lay aside, in a great measure, all distinction between virtue and vice, as if God would never summon them before his judgment-seat. The punishment of Cain, the destruction of the whole world by the deluge, the burning of Sodom, the punishment inflicted on Pharaoh and Abimelech on account of Abraham, and finally the plagues of Egypt, clearly prove that crimes were imputed to men by God. The numerous complaints and expostulations by which men accuse each other of iniquity, and the various apologies, for the purpose of exculpating with care and zeal their own conduct, clearly prove the mutual

imputation of crime and vice in human transactions. There are, finally, frequent examples to convince every individual of his own consciousness of good and evil; but, in general, persons so connive at their own evil actions, as to impute no sins to themselves unless by compulsion. When, therefore, Paul asserts that sin is not imputed without law, he speaks comparatively, since men sink down into sloth and indolence, where they are not goaded on to action by the law. Paul has introduced this opinion with much prudence, that the Jews might hence become better acquainted with the heinous guilt of such as are openly condemned by the law. For if persons, never cited by God as guilty before his tribunal, were not acquitted from punishment, what shall become of the Jews to whom the law, as a herald, proclaims their guilt, nay, denounces judgment? Another reason why the apostle expressly says sin had reigned before the law, without being imputed, is to acquaint us with this truth,—that the cause of death does not arise from the law, but is only pointed out by it. He declares, therefore, that all had been miserably ruined immediately after the fall of Adam, although death had finally been disclosed by the law. It will suit the context better to translate the adversative particle *although*, and the sense is as follows: “Let men indulge in sin as they choose, they will never be able to escape the judgment of God, although they are not convicted by the law.”

*Death reigned from Adam*—Paul explains, with greater clearness, that the licentious and abandoned security with which mankind from Adam to the promulgation of the law, having bid adieu to every distinction between virtue and vice, revelled in sin, was of no avail in rescuing them from its curse. Although the very remembrance of sin had been

obliterated without the admonition of the law, it still continued to flourish with vigour, and drag its votaries to trial and condemnation. Wherefore death also then reigned, because the judgment of God could not be destroyed by man's blindness and hardness of heart. *Even over those who had not—* Although this passage is generally understood of little children, who, without being guilty of any actual transgression, perish from original sin, yet I prefer to interpret it generally of those who have sinned without law. For this sentence must be joined with the preceding words, where it was said, sin was not imputed where there was no law. They did not, therefore, sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression; because they had not, as their first father, the will of God revealed to them by a certain oracle from heaven. For the Lord had forbidden Adam to touch the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the testimony of conscience was the only command given them. The apostle, therefore, was desirous to give a hint that this difference between Adam and his posterity could not free them from condemnation. This universal catalogue may also include infants. *Who is the figure of him that was to come—* This sentence is given instead of the other part of the comparison, which he has omitted, and it must be supplied in the following manner: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so righteousness returned by one man, and life by righteousness." We need not be surprised at his calling Adam a type of Christ, for some similitude is always apparent even in subjects the most contrary. Since, therefore, as we are all ruined by the sin of Adam, so we are repaired by the righteousness of Christ, Adam is not improperly called a type of the Messiah. Observe, also, that Adam is not called a figure of sin, and Christ of righteous-

ness, as if they led us in the way only by their example ; but one of them is compared with the other, that we may not fall into the foolish imagination and ruinous error of Origen. For he disputes, in a philosophical and profane manner, concerning the corruption of the human race ; and not only weakens, but almost entirely destroys the grace of Christ. No excuse, therefore, can be made for Erasmus, who labours too much in framing an apology for so gross and daring an opinion.

15 But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if, through the offence of one, many be dead ; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

*But not as the offence*—The apostle, in correcting his comparisons between Christ and Adam, does not consider so minutely the distinctions by which they are characterized, as he opposes the errors into which his readers might be apt to fall. We will supply what is wanting to complete the explanation. The apostle, in his frequent repetitions of the difference between Christ and Adam, always preserves some opposition, or writes elliptically : these imperfections in the language of our author weaken in no measure the majesty of that heavenly wisdom which has been communicated to us by his writings. Nay, the singular providence of God has determined to make us acquainted with these deep mysteries by means of a low and contemptible style, that our faith might not depend upon the power of human eloquence, but upon the alone efficacy of the Spirit. He does not as yet expressly state here the reason why he corrects his comparison ; but he simply informs us

that the grace acquired by Christ is more extensive, and of greater compass, than the condemnation contracted by the first man. I know not whether all my readers will agree in opinion with such commentators as consider the apostle to establish his proofs by argument. No objection can be formed against the conclusiveness of the following inference : " If the fall of Adam availed so much for the destruction of many, the grace of God will be much more efficacious for the blessing of many, since it is confessed that Christ is much more powerful to save than Adam to destroy." I leave it to my readers to choose either of the interpretations they prefer, since it is impossible to refute the opinion of those who consider the apostle not to pursue, in this passage, a chain of reasoning. It is, however, probable that Paul simply corrected, or rendered more accurate by his exception, the comparison which he has instituted between Adam and Christ, because none can consider any inference to be contained in the following passage, which is treated in the same manner. Paul, it is to be observed, does not draw a comparison between the number ruined by Adam and saved by Christ, for he is not speaking of the whole body of mankind, but he argues, that as the sin of Adam had involved many in ruin, so the righteousness of Christ would be of no less avail for the salvation of many. The apostle says, we *perished by the offence of one*, because corruption was transferred from Adam to us his descendants. For our ruin is not so effected by Adam's guilt as to leave us without blame; but Paul assigns our ruin to Adam, because his sin was the cause of ours. I call it our sin, which is natural to us, and with which we are born. *The grace of God, and the gift by grace*—Grace is properly opposed to offence; the gift which proceeds from grace is contrasted with death. Grace, therefore, signifies the mere goodness,

or the gratuitous love of Jehovah, an example of which was afforded us in Christ to succour and relieve our misery. And the gift is the fruit of mercy, which has extended to us, namely, reconciliation, whereby we have attained life and salvation, righteousness, newness of life, and every thing of a similar nature. This shows the ignorant and bungling definition of grace given by the schoolmen, who determine it to be merely a quality infused into the hearts of men; for grace is properly in God, the effect of grace exists in ourselves. And Paul says, it was of the one man Christ, because the Father made him the fountain from whose fulness all may draw their supplies. He thus teaches us that not a drop of life can be found out of Christ, and the transferring of his own abundance into us believers, is the only remedy for our want and poverty.

16 And not as *it was* by one that sinned, so *is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation ; but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

This is the reason of his particular correction of the comparison between Adam and Christ, that guiltiness prevailed from one offence to the condemnation of us all ; but grace, or rather the gratuitous gift, is sufficiently efficacious to justify us from many offences. For it is the declaration of the following sentence, because he had not yet stated how, or in what respect, Christ surpasses Adam. The correctness of this distinction between Christ and Adam having been granted, we clearly see the impiety of those sentiments, which state that we recovered nothing else in Christ except our liberation from original sin, or corruption contracted by Adam.

The numerous offences, from which the apostle testifies we are purified by the blessing of Christ, do not merely include our transgressions before baptism, but the new guilt daily contracted by the sins of believers, which would deservedly subject them to condemnation, unless the divine grace afforded them constant relief. When the gift is contrasted with judgment, the latter implies unrelenting rigour; the former gratuitous pardon; for condemnation results from rigid judgment; absolution, from free pardon: or, which amounts to the same thing, if God deals with us according to our deserts, we are all involved in one common ruin, but we are freely and gratuitously justified by our infinite Sovereign in Christ.

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

*For if by the offence of one*—He again subjoins a general correction of his comparison, on which he more fully insists; for he designs not to follow out the consideration of every particular, but to determine the chief sum of the whole matter. He had before declared that the power of grace had been more abundant than transgression, and, on this ground, comforts and confirms believers, while he encourages and exhorts them to reflect on the kindness of God. For the earnestness of his repetitions proceeds from a desire that grace should be celebrated according to its dignity; that men should be withdrawn from a confidence in themselves, and led to place unbounded reliance upon Christ; and that, after we have become partakers of his grace, we may enjoy full and complete security, which is finally the

spring and foundation of our gratitude. The following is the sum of the whole :—“ Since Christ surpasses Adam, the sin of the latter is overcome by the righteousness of the former ; the curse of the latter is overwhelmed and sunk in the grace of the former ; the life of Christ swallows up the death which derived its commencement from our first parent.” Neither, indeed, do the different parts of this comparison mutually correspond with each other, for Paul ought to have stated that the blessing of life reigns and flourishes more by the abundance of grace ; instead of which, he says that the righteous shall reign in life : the sense, however, is the same, “ for the kingdom of the faithful in life, is also the reign of life in believers.” It is also of importance to point out here two distinctions between Christ and Adam, which the apostle omitted, not as if he considered them unworthy of his attention, but because their enumeration had no relation to his present argument. The first is, that Adam’s sin does not condemn us by imputation alone, as if we were punished for the sin of another ; but his punishment is therefore inflicted upon us because we are guilty of transgression, since our nature, being corrupted in Adam, is bound under the guilt of iniquity in the sight of God. But Christ’s righteousness restores us to salvation by another method, which is not accepted of God because it is within us ; but the bounty of the Father makes us possess Christ himself, who is bestowed upon us with all his blessings. The gift of righteousness, therefore, does not signify a quality with which God endues us, according to the vain interpretation of some, but the gratuitous imputation of righteousness ; for the apostle explains what he meant by the word *grace*. The other distinction is, that Christ’s benefit does not extend to all men, as Adam involved his whole race in

condemnation. And the reason is evident; for since the curse we receive from Adam is derived by nature from him to us, we need not be surprised at its embracing the whole mass of mankind, while we cannot become partakers of the grace of Christ, unless we are ingrafted into him by faith. The mere participation of human nature is therefore sufficient to entail the wretched inheritance of sin, for it resides in flesh and blood; but faith is necessary to entitle us to the righteousness of Christ, since believers only can be made partakers of so great a blessing. It is communicated in a peculiar way to infants, for they have the right of adoption in the covenant, by which they enter into communion with Christ. I speak of the children of the pious, to whom the promise of grace is directed, for others are by no means exempted from the common lot.

18 Therefore, as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

The passage is defective, which will be rendered complete by reading the words *condemnation* and *justification* in the nominative, so as to supply the full and entire sense. This also forms the conclusion of the preceding general comparison, for he omits mentioning the inserted correction, and completes the similitude, "as by the offence of one we were rendered sinners, so the righteousness of Christ has sufficient power to justify us." The Greek word which he uses in this place for *righteousness*, does not signify that he was privately righteous on his own account; but its meaning is more extensive, and implies the enriching of believers by the gift conferred upon the

Redeemer. Paul makes grace common to all, because it is proposed and declared to all, but in reality not extended to all; for though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and, by the kindness of God, is offered indifferently to all, yet he is not apprehended and laid hold of by all mankind. The two words *judgment* and *grace*, which he lately used, might be repeated in this sense: "As by the judgment of God the sin of one was conveyed by descent to the condemnation of many, so grace will have strength, and energy, for the justification of many." Justification of life, in my opinion, conveys the idea of absolution, which restores life to us, as if he had said life-giving. For our hope of salvation springs from God being propitious, and we cannot be accepted by him unless we are righteous. Life, therefore, flows from justification.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

This is not tautology, but the necessary declaration of the important truth, that the offence of one man proves us so sunk in guilt, that we cannot be innocent. He had before said that we were condemned; but to prevent us from daring to claim innocence as our own, he determined also to subjoin the universal condemnation of every individual of the human race, because he is a sinner. When he afterwards declares that we are made righteous by the obedience of Christ, we hence infer that Christ has procured righteousness for us, because he has satisfied his Father. Hence it follows that righteousness exists in Christ as a quality, but what is his peculiar property is considered as bestowed on us believers. He explains also what he means by the

righteousness of Christ, when he denominates it obedience; where we may observe, that absolute obedience to the law in all its parts, not merely some of its precepts, can alone entitle us to stand before the presence of God, if we wish to be justified by works. For if a righteous person has fallen, all his former righteousnesses are not remembered. We may hence learn the folly of such self-formed plans, as men contrive to force upon God, for the purpose of satisfying his eternal justice. For we never adopt a true method of worshipping the Supreme Being until we follow his precepts, and yield obedience to his word. May the confidence of such, as arrogantly claim for themselves righteousness by works, cease for ever, for nothing except a full and entire observance of the law, which it is certain no human being can perform, entitles any one to entertain so vain an expectation. We hence also infer, how great is the folly of those boasters to God of works of their own invention, which are held by the Judge in no higher esteem than the vilest ordure. For obedience is better than sacrifice.

20 Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Moreover, the law entered*—This question depends on his former observation, that sin existed before the giving of the law; for after making this statement, he immediately added, *what then serveth the law?* This difficulty, therefore, required to be solved; but as he had then no opportunity for a longer digres-

sion, he deferred the consideration of it until he came to this place, and he now shows, in passing, the law to have entered that the offence might abound. Neither does he state the whole office and use of the law, but treats only of one part, which suited his present purpose. For he points out the necessity he was under of disclosing more fully to mankind their ruin, that he might have an opportunity afforded for displaying the grace of God. Men, indeed, were shipwrecked before the law; but as they conceived themselves to be swimming even in their very ruin, they were plunged into the vast abyss, that their deliverance might be more striking, when they emerge, contrary to all human expectation, from such an awful state. And there was no absurdity in the law, being in some measure passed for this very reason, that it might twice condemn men, whose condemnation had once been sealed; for nothing is more just than by every possible means to bring the human race, nay, drag them, when convicted, to have a sense of their own sins and wickedness. *That the offence might abound*--The general method of explaining this passage, since the time of Augustine, is well known,—that men's lusts are more irritated when restrained by the barriers of the law, for it is a natural propensity in man to oppose what is forbidden. I consider no other *abounding* to be meant in this passage but that of knowledge and obstinacy. For sin is so placed, by the law, before the eyes and attention of mankind, that they are constantly compelled to behold themselves prepared for condemnation. Sin, which men would otherwise reject, despise, and neglect, in this way takes possession of the conscience. Besides, the person who before simply overstepped the bounds of righteousness, becomes, when the law has been once appointed,

a despiser of divine power and authority, by which he was made acquainted with the will of the Lord of Hosts, and tramples upon it by his own unbridled passion. An increase of sin by the law is the necessary result of such conduct, because the authority of the Lawgiver is then despised, and his majesty impaired. *Grace did much more abound*—Grace came to the relief of mankind, after sin had long held them plunged under its power; for Paul teaches us that the greatness and extent of grace are, therefore, more strikingly illustrated, because it is poured out in so copious a manner during the abounding of sin, as not only to overcome, but even to absorb the overflowing deluge of iniquity. From this we may learn, that condemnation is not set before us in the law for the purpose of making us continue under its power, but to advance us, after we have become intimately acquainted with our misery, to the enjoyment of Christ, who is sent to be a physician to the sick, a deliverer of captives, a comforter to the afflicted, and an avenger of the oppressed. (Isa. lxi. 1.)

*That as sin reigned*—As sin is called the sting of death, because death has no other power against man except on account of sin, so this last is said to exert its power by death. In the latter sentence the order of the words is designedly confused. If the apostle had used the expression, “that righteousness may reign by Christ,” he would only have contrasted righteousness with sin; but not satisfied with this opposition, he adds grace, with a view to fix more indelibly on the memory, that the whole of our righteousness does not proceed from our own merit, but from divine kindness. He had before said, that death itself had reigned; he now bestows the kingdom on sin, the end or effect of which is death. He uses the past tense, *to have reigned*, not as if sin had

ceased to reign in such as are only born of flesh and blood, but he makes such a division between Adam and Christ, as to assign his own time to each. When the grace, therefore, of Christ begins to act with power in certain individuals, the kingdom of sin and death ceases.

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## CHAPTER VI.

1 **W**HAT shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

*What shall we say then?*—The apostle, in the whole of this chapter, enters into a discussion for the purpose of showing that Christ is, in a false and perverse manner, divided and torn in pieces by those who imagine our Redeemer has conferred upon us a gratuitous justification, without imparting newness of life. Nay, he even goes farther than this, and adduces it as an objection, that an opportunity seems to be then offered for the workings of divine grace, when men lie fixed and overwhelmed in sin. For we know with what readiness the flesh seizes every pretext for indulging its own propensities, and with how much facility satan contrives all kinds of calumnies, by which he may slander the doctrines of grace. We ought not to be astonished if, whenever the doctrine of justification is preached, the flesh dashes itself, as it were, against various rocks, since every truth proclaimed concerning Christ appears altogether paradoxical to the judgment of the natural man. The follower of Christ must, however, pro-

ceed onward in his course ; nor is the Messiah to be suppressed, because he is to many a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. For as, on the one hand, he may prove to be the ruin of the wicked, he will, on the other, be the resurrection from the dead to the pious. We must, however, always answer unreasonable and foolish questions, that no absurdity may appear to be connected with the doctrine of Christ. The apostle now, therefore, examines the most common objection against preaching the doctrine of divine grace, namely, If it is true that the grace of God is conferred upon us more liberally and abundantly, according to the greater load and weight of sin by which we are overwhelmed, nothing can be more profitable to us than to provoke the indignation of God, by being plunged in the very abyss of sin, and the frequent perpetration of new offences, for we shall then finally experience a more copious supply of his grace, which is the greatest blessing we can desire. The manner of answering this objection will be afterwards considered.

*God forbid*—Some commentators consider that the object of the apostle was to reprove, in a very strong manner, the foolish madness of this objection ; but other passages prove this answer to be frequently used by the apostle, even in the midst of a close discussion, as he here also with very great care soon after repels the calumny adduced against the doctrine of grace. He shows, in the first place, thus forcibly his detestation of the objection, for the purpose of proving to his readers, that nothing is more absurd than to support and nourish our vices by the grace of Christ, which is the most powerful means for restoring our own righteousness. *We who are dead to sin*—He argues from the contrary, for he who sins must undoubtedly live to sin ; we are dead to sin by the grace of Christ, therefore the position

is false, that grace gives vigour to sin, which it abolishes. For the truth is, that believers are never reconciled to God without the gift of regeneration ; nay, we are justified for this very end and design, that we may afterwards worship God in purity of life. Nor does Christ in any other manner wash us by his blood, and render God propitious to us by his expiation and atonement, than while he makes us partakers of his own Spirit, which renews us into a holy life. It would, therefore, be the most preposterous inversion of the work of God, if sin should acquire strength by means of that grace which is offered to us in Christ. We might, with as much truth, consider medicine to be the fomenter of that disease which it destroys. We ought, also, constantly to keep in mind, what I lately touched upon, that Paul is not here considering in what state God finds us, when he calls us to be partakers of the fellowship of his Son, but points out what characters we ought to be when, in pity, he has gratuitously adopted us. The apostle, by using the adverb of the future time, points out the change which ought to follow justification.

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

*Are you ignorant*—The apostle proves that Christ destroys sin in his people from the effect of baptism, by which we are initiated into the faith of the Messiah. For we, without controversy, put on Christ in baptism, and are baptized on this condi-

tion, that we may be one with him. Paul thus assumes another principle, that we then truly grow into the body of Christ when his death produces its own fruit in us who believe. Nay, he teaches us that this fellowship of his death is chiefly to be regarded in baptism, for washing alone is not proposed in this initiatory ordinance, but mortification, and the death of the old man ; whence the efficacy of Christ's death shows itself from the moment we are received into his grace. The effect which this fellowship with the death of Christ can produce immediately follows.

*Therefore we are buried with him*—He now begins to show what is meant by being baptized into the death of Christ, though he does not yet give a full explanation, namely, that, being dead to ourselves, we may become new men. For he justly makes us pass from the fellowship of the death of Christ to the partaking of his life, since these two are indissolubly united together,—the abolishing of the old man by the death of Christ, that his resurrection may renew our righteousness, and make us new creatures. And since Christ was certainly given us for life, what advantage do we gain by dying with him, if we do not rise again to a better life ? Our mortal part, therefore, dies, for no other cause than that Christ may truly restore us to life. We ought, likewise, to know, that we are not, in this passage, merely exhorted by the apostle to imitate Christ, as if he had said, all Christians ought to take Christ's death for an example to follow and imitate ; for he certainly aims at something higher than this, and deduces from it the following doctrine, on which he will afterwards ground his exhortation. The doctrine is, “ that the death of Christ is able to extinguish and overthrow the wickedness of our flesh ; and his resurrection, to raise us to the newness of a better nature ; and we

are chosen by baptism to become partakers of this grace." The apostle, having laid this foundation, can very properly exhort Christians to use every effort to walk in a manner corresponding with their calling. The circumstance of this virtue not appearing in all who are baptized makes no difference; for Paul, in his usual manner, when addressing believers, joins the substance and the effect with the external sign; for we know whatever the Lord offers by his visible symbol is ratified and confirmed by their faith. He shows us, summarily, what is the true import of baptism when properly received. Thus (Gal. iii. 27) he testifies that all the Galatians, who had been baptized into Christ, had "put on Christ." Such language must indeed always be used, as long as the institution of baptism by the Lord, and the faith of believers correspond. For the symbols of Christ are never empty and vain, unless the power and efficacy of the divine kindness are prevented by our ingratitude and wickedness. *By the glory of the Father*—The remarkable virtue by which he declared himself to be truly glorious, and displayed, as it were, the magnificent splendour of his glory. Thus the power of God, which exerted itself in the resurrection of Christ, is often distinguished by some striking testimony; nor is this done without reason; for it is of very great importance, by so express a relation of the incomparable power of God, not only to exalt, in a magnificent manner, the faith which we entertain of the last resurrection, very much surpassing the sense and judgment of our fleshly nature, but to raise, also, in our esteem, the fruits and advantages which we derive from the resurrection of Christ.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness*

of *his* resurrection : 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

*For if we have been planted*—The apostle confirms his former argument by using language still more intelligible, for the comparison he adopts removes all ambiguity, since the engrafting not only signifies our conformity to the example of Christ, but our secret union, by which we grow into one body with Him; so that, making us flourish by his own Spirit, his power is transferred into our character. As the branch, therefore, has the common condition of life and death with the tree into which it is engrafted, so there is sufficient reason why we should become equally partakers of the life and death of Christ. For if we are engrafted into the likeness of Christ's death, which is never separated from his resurrection, neither can our death to sin take place, unless united with our spiritual resurrection. The words in this passage may be either referred simply to the likeness of Christ, or to the likeness of his death ; but, since the sense is the same in both cases, any remarks on the difference of expression are of little consequence. Chrysostom understood the *likeness of death* to mean only death, as the likeness of man (Phil. ii. 7) signifies merely man. The expression, however, in my opinion, conveys a much more forcible signification than our simply dying a natural death, as Christ did ; and it implies the following agreement of our death with his : “ That as Christ died in the flesh, which he had received from us, so we die in ourselves for the purpose of living in our Saviour.” Our death, therefore, is not the same with that of Christ, but similar to it, for we must always keep our attention directed to the analogy between the death of the

present life and our spiritual renewing. *Planted*—The meaning of this word is very emphatic, and clearly proves that the apostle is rather teaching us concerning the benefit we derive from Christ than simply exhorting us to duty. For he does not require us to perform any thing which *our* zeal and industry can accomplish, but he proclaims the engrafting of God. We must not labour to make the metaphor or comparison to agree in all its parts, for, in the engrafting of trees, the branch derives its support from the root, but the fruit retains its own natural quality and taste; but, in spiritual engrafting, we not only derive the juice and vigour of our life from Christ, but remove from our own nature into his. The apostle distinctly points to the efficacy of Christ's death, which exerts itself in the destruction of our flesh. The power of the resurrection of Jesus is displayed by renewing in us the better nature of his Spirit.

*That our old man*—Man is called old, as the Old Testament is with respect to the New, for he begins to be old, when his nature is gradually abolished by the influence of regeneration, after it has commenced. The apostle means our whole nature which we bring from the womb; and it is so far from being able to receive the kingdom of God, that it *must* necessarily perish in the same proportion as we are renewed into the true life of holiness. He says, this old man is fixed to the cross of Christ, because it is destroyed by his power; and he particularly alludes to the cross, that he might prove, in a more express manner, our mortification of sin to arise from no other cause than our partaking of his death. For I do not agree with those commentators who consider, in their expositions, the word *crucified* to be used by the apostle rather than *dead*, because sin yet lives, and, in some measure, flourishes in our nature. This

opinion is indeed true, but little suited to the present passage. The body of sin, afterwards mentioned by Paul, does not mean flesh and bones, but the entire mass; for man, when left to his own proper nature, is a mass made up of sin. The expression, *that we should henceforth not serve sin*, points to the design of the crucifixion of Christ, namely, the abolition of sin. Hence it follows, as a necessary consequence, that, while we are the sons of Adam, and continue mere men, we are so completely under the bondage of sin as to be able to do nothing else than offend God; when, however, we are engrafted into Christ, we are freed from this wretched necessity, not by our immediately ceasing from the entire commission of sin, but from our becoming finally conquerors in the combat.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*For he that is dead*—The argument is derived from the quality or effect of death, for if death destroys all the actions of life, we, who are dead to sin, ought to cease from those actions of sin which it exercised over us during the continuance of its life. The word *justified* means being absolved and restored from slavery, for, as the culprit, acquitted by the sentence of the judge, is freed from the bond of accusation, so death, by releasing us from the present life,

delivers us from all the duties it enjoins. Although such an example, indeed, is no where to be found among men, yet we must not regard the statement of the apostle to be an empty speculation, nor ought we to yield to despondency because we do not find ourselves among the number of those who have entirely crucified the flesh. For this work of God is not perfected on the first day when it commences its operations in us, but gradually increases ; and, making daily advancement, is brought by little and little to its completion. To sum up all, “ If you are a Christian, you must exhibit in yourself a sign of your communion with the death of Christ, and, as a fruit of this, your flesh will be crucified with all its desires.” You must not, however, conclude that you have made no progress in this communion, if you find the remains of sin still continuing to live in you, but you must never cease to meditate on the best plans for increasing your participation of Christ’s death, until you shall have reached the goal. It is well with the believer, if his flesh is continually mortified ; and he has made great progress when the Holy Spirit has taken possession of the kingdom which has been acquired from the flesh. There is another participation of the death of Christ, mentioned frequently by the apostle, as well in other passages, but particularly in the 2 Cor. iv., namely, the bearing of the cross, which is followed by our becoming partakers of eternal life.

*Now, if we be dead*—He repeats this with no other design, but to subjoin the following declaration, *that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more* ; and he intends to teach us, by this passage, the necessity imposed upon Christians of their pursuing this newness of life during the whole of their mortal career. For, if they ought to represent in themselves the image of Christ, both by the morti-

fication of the flesh and the life of the Spirit, the former must necessarily take place once and for ever, and the duration of the latter can never terminate. Not, as we have already observed, because our flesh can die in us in one moment, but no liberty is allowed for our going back in this mortification ; since, if we again return to our wallowing in the mire, we deny Christ, for we can only become partakers of him by newness of life, as he now enjoys a state of incorruptible existence.

*Death has no more dominion over him*—The apostle seems to hint, that death had once enjoyed dominion over Christ, and when he indeed gave himself up to death for us, he submitted and subjected himself, in some measure, to its power ; yet on this condition, that he could not possibly be held bound by its pains, yield to its authority, or be consumed by it. By undergoing its power, therefore, for a moment, he devoured death for ever, though, to speak more simply, the dominion of death is referred to the voluntary condition of Christ's death which was terminated by his resurrection. In fine, Christ, who now gives life to believers by his Spirit, or inspires into them from heaven his own life by a secret virtue, was exempted from the dominion of death when he rose from the dead to rescue his followers from the same.

*He died unto sin once*—The apostle adduces our perpetual deliverance from the *yoke* of death by the example of Christ, which he had already mentioned, as well suited to support his opinion that we are indeed no more subject to the tyranny of sin ; and this truth is demonstrated by the final cause of the death of Christ, for he indeed died to accomplish the utter destruction of sin. The very form of expression, as applied to Christ, shows that he did not, like us, die to sin for the purpose of ceasing to commit it, but he died as a ransom for sin, thus annihi-

lating its power and authority. The apostle says, Christ died unto sin once, not only because he sanctified believers for ever by the eternal redemption which he procured by his one oblation, and by the cleansing of sin accomplished by the shedding of his blood, but for the purpose of establishing a mutual resemblance between us and our Redeemer. For notwithstanding spiritual death makes continual progress in believers, yet we are properly said to die once, since Christ not only reconciles us to the Father by his own blood, but regenerates us also, at the same time, by the power of his Spirit. (Heb. x. 14.) *But in that he liveth*—The sense is not changed, whether the passage is translated *unto God* or *in God*, for it means to live, in the immortal and incorruptible kingdom of God, a life subject to no mortality ; and a likeness of this ought to manifest itself in the regeneration of the pious. We must always keep in mind the proper meaning of the word *likeness*, as used by Paul ; for he does not say we shall live in heaven in the same way as Christ does in that scene of happiness, but he makes the new life from regeneration, which we spend on earth, to resemble the heavenly life of our Saviour. The duty of our dying to sin, after the example of Christ, does not imply the same death with his, for we die to sin when sin dies to us ; on the other hand, Christ, by dying, has completely destroyed sin. The word *believe*, used by the apostle, when he before said that we shall also live with our Redeemer, shows him to be speaking of the grace of Christ ; for, had he been merely admonishing us of a duty to be performed, he would have used the following language : “ Since we are dead with Christ, we ought, in like manner, to live with him.” The doctrine of faith, founded on the promises, is evidently treated of in this passage by the apostle ; as if he had said, “ Be-

lievers ought to fix in their minds that, by the benefit of Christ, they are so dead according to the flesh, as to have the newness of life continued to the end by the power of the same Saviour.” The future tense, *we shall live*, does not relate to the last resurrection, but simply implies the perpetual course of a new life as long as we are pilgrims in the world.

*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves*—The apostle now adapts to our case, by analogy, what he said concerning Christ dying to sin once, and living eternally to God, and instructs us how we may now die by living, when we truly renounce our sins. But he does not omit mentioning the duty of our embracing once by faith the grace of Christ; for, provided the mortification of the flesh has only commenced in us, the life of sin will, by this very means, be extinguished, that the newness of the Spirit, which is divine, may continue for ever. For unless Christ destroyed sin in us once, so as to bring it to a final termination, his grace would have been defective in firmness and stability. The meaning of the passage is, “that in consideration of your own case, as Christ died once for the destruction of sin, so you are indeed once dead, that you may cease to sin for the future; nay, you must daily advance in the mortification of your flesh, which has been commenced, until sin shall be completely extinguished. As Christ was raised to an incorruptible life, so you are renewed by the grace of God, that you may spend the whole of your life in holiness and righteousness, since the power of the Holy Spirit, by which you are renewed, is eternal, and will always flourish in strength and vigour.” I prefer the translation *in Christ*, to that of Erasmus, *by Christ*, because it conveys more clearly the idea of spiritual engrafting, which makes us one with Christ.

12 Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof: 13 Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

*Let not sin, therefore, reign*—He now commences his exhortation, which naturally rises out of the doctrine delivered by the apostle, concerning our communion with Christ, in the following manner:—

( “ Though sin resides in us, yet there is an absurdity in supposing it to be vigorous and active in the exercise of its dominion; for the power of holiness ought to be much superior to it, so that our life may prove that we are truly the members of Christ.” )

The word *body*, I have lately hinted, is not taken in the sense of flesh, skin, and bones; but means, if I may be allowed the expression, the whole mass of man. The present passage supports more clearly such an interpretation, for the other member of the sentence, which he afterwards adds, concerning the parts of the body, relates also to the mind. Paul thus means, in a gross sense, the earthly man, for the corruption of our nature prevents us from breathing any thing worthy of our origin. Thus God also, (Gen. vi. 3,) while he complains of man as well as brute beasts having become *flesh*, leaves him nothing but an earthly nature. The language of our Saviour, (John iii. 6,) “ That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” conveys the same meaning. It is easy to answer the objection, which some may propose, that the mind cannot be considered to be so earthly, since in our present degenerate state our souls are so fixed to the earth, and

devoted to bodily gratifications, that they have departed from their own natural excellence.—Finally, the nature of man is termed corporeal, because, having been deprived of heavenly grace, it is now only a certain deceitful shadow or image. This body is contemptuously denominated *mortal* by Paul, for the purpose of teaching us that the whole human nature of man is prone to death and destruction. He now, indeed, terms sin that first depraved inclination which is seated in our minds, and impels us to the commission of sin, from which as a fountain all our crimes and wickedness properly flow. He imagines our desires to be intermediate between sin and us, so that sin assumes the character of a king, and our inordinate desires are the edicts and orders which are issued by his authority.

*Neither yield ye your members*—When sin has once fixed its kingdom in our mind, all the parts of our body are immediately directed to yield it obedience. Paul, therefore, in this passage, describes the kingdom of sin from its results, that he may point out, in a more striking manner, what steps we ought to take, if we are desirous to cast off its yoke. The apostle, in calling our members *instruments*, or arms, derives the simile from a military life ; for as a soldier has his armour always in a state of readiness, that he may be prepared to use it whenever his commander shall issue his orders, and never girds on his arms except at the nod of his general ; so Christians ought to regard all their members as arms for a spiritual combat ; and if any of them are abused in gratifying depraved inclinations, they are in the service of sin. Believers have also devoted themselves, by their military oath, to Christ and God, and are held bound to pay them obedience, and it becomes the pious to keep at a distance from all intercourse with the camp of sin. We may hence see what

right those have to call themselves Christians, with all the pomp of pride, whose every member is in a state of readiness, as if sold to the service of satan, to commit all uncleanness with greediness. Paul now orders us, on the other hand, to stand entirely ready for the service of God, that, restraining our mind and inclination from wandering after any of those vices into which the desires of the flesh might lead us, we should keep our attention fixed on the will of God alone, be always ready to obey his commands, and in a state of preparation to observe his orders. Our *members* also should be prepared and consecrated to his will, so that all the faculties, both of our mind and body, should breathe after nothing but his glory. The reason is also added,—because the Lord, having destroyed our former life, has created us for another, with which our actions ought to correspond.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

*For sin shall not have dominion over you*—It is unnecessary for me to recite or refute expositions

which have little or no appearance of truth. The interpretation, which understands the expression, *to be under the law*, to mean, being subject to the letter of the law, without the renewal of the mind, as *to be under grace*, implies freedom from depraved desires by the Spirit of grace, though it has the appearance of greater probability than other interpretations, does not meet my entire approbation. For if this sense of the passage be adopted, why does the apostle propose the question, *Shall we sin because we are not under the law?* The very statement of the question proves Paul to have understood us to be so freed from the rigour of the law, as to be no longer treated by God according to its utmost demands. He undoubtedly, therefore, wished to point out, by this expression, some deliverance from the bondage of the law of the Lord. I will briefly explain my own view of this passage, without entering into a controversial examination of the sentiments of other commentators. The apostle seems to me, in the first place, to comfort and strengthen believers, lest they should faint in their zeal and desire after holiness, on account of the sense which they feel of their own weakness. He exhorts believers to exert all their faculties in performing obedience to the righteousness of the law. The remains of sin, however, must necessarily make them in part halt. To prevent their discouragement and despondency from a consciousness of infirmity, he affords them seasonable consolation from the consideration of their works not being now exacted according to the rigid demand of the law; but God, forgiving their impurity, accepts them in a kind, gracious, and indulgent manner. The yoke of the law cannot be borne without breaking or wearing down those who are subject to its power and on this account believers must fly to Christ, and implore his assistance as a

defender of their liberty, who is always ready to present himself in this character. For the Redeemer submitted himself unto the bondage of the law, who was not on any other account a debtor to its demands, that he might redeem those who were under the law, as the apostle states: (Gal. iv. 5.) *Not to be under the law*, therefore, means, "that it is not only prescribed to us as a dead letter, when it condemns us as guilty, because we have not power to obey it; but, also, that we are no more subject to the law, since it exacts a perfect righteousness, and pronounces death against all who shall have swerved from any part of its demands." Under the word *grace*, we likewise include both parts of redemption, and mean, "the forgiveness of sins, by which God imputes righteousness to us, and also the sanctification of the Spirit, by which he reforms us to good works." If we translate the passage, "Because we are under grace, therefore we are not under the law," as the Greek particle frequently allows to be done, the sense will evidently be, that the apostle wishes to afford comfort, and prevent us from fainting in our zealous pursuit of good living, because we still feel in ourselves many imperfections. For notwithstanding the stings of sin continue to harass us, yet they cannot bring us under their power, because we are rendered superior to them by the Spirit of God: we are also freed from the rigid demand of the law, when we are established in grace. The apostle, it must here be understood, undoubtedly presupposes that all men, destitute of the grace of God, are bound by the yoke, and held under the condemnation of the law. We may, therefore, on the contrary, infer that all, while under the law, are subject to the dominion of sin.

*What then?*—Because fleshly wisdom is always railing against divine mysteries, Paul necessarily

subjoins this anticipation of the objections of his opponent ; for as the law is the rule for a good life, and given for moderating the affections and conduct of mankind, we imagine, if it is broken, that all discipline will be immediately overthrown, all bars and checks against iniquity be broken, and all choice and distinction between good and evil annihilated. The chief fallacy in this reasoning consists in our imagining the righteousness commended by God in the law to be abolished by its abrogation, without considering that the precepts of the law, as a rule of life, are confirmed and ratified, rather than abrogated by Christ. The proper solution of the objection consists in showing the curse of the law only to be taken away by the gospel, and the whole race of mortals to be condemned by this, unless the grace of Christ intervene. Paul, though he does not expressly state this, points at it in an oblique manner.

*God forbid. Know ye not*—This is not a mere expression, as some have supposed, of Paul's rather detesting such a question than of his refuting it ; for the confutation of the objection immediately follows, derived from the nature of contraries, in the following sense : “There is so great a dissension between the yoke of Christ and of sin, that no one can endure both at the same time. If we sin, we give ourselves up to the bondage of sin ; but, on the contrary, believers are redeemed from the tyranny of sin, to become the servants of Christ ; and, on this account, it is impossible for them to remain the slaves of sin.” But it will be useful more carefully to examine the order taken by Paul in investigating this argument.

*To whom you obey*—The relative pronoun, which is very common, has the force of a causal particle. As if it should be said, a parricide is guilty of every crime, by daring to commit the most dreadful wickedness, and to perpetrate an act of cruelty, at

which even the very brute beasts shudder. Paul reasons partly from effects, and partly from the nature of correlatives. For, in the first place, he infers their servitude by their obedience, for this cannot take place, unless there is some person who has the authority of command, by which obedience can be compelled. This reasoning depends on the effects of slavery ; and it hence follows, if you are slaves, that dominion is, on the other hand, in the power of the master. *Or of obedience*—If the apostle had intended the parts of the sentence mutually to correspond, he would have said, *or of righteousness to life*. Since, however, the sense of the passage is not injured by inverting the words, he preferred, by using *obedience*, to express the idea of righteousness, which, by taking the cause for the effect, denotes the very commands of God. His using the word without an adjunct, shows that God alone has power over the consciences of mankind ; for obedience is referred to God, though the word is suppressed, because it cannot be misunderstood, or applied to any other object.

*Thanks be to God*—He now applies the simile to the case immediately before him, by admonishing the believers in Rome, that they were not the slaves of sin ; and he adds also thanksgiving, for the purpose of showing them, in the first place, that their deliverance from the power of sin does not arise from their own proper merit, but the peculiar mercy of God ; and, in the second place, their gratitude to God shows how great a blessing the Giver of all good had bestowed upon them, while their detestation of sin was thus more powerfully excited in their minds. He returns thanks on account of their deliverance from sin, which had resulted from ceasing to follow the course of their former iniquity, and has no respect to the period when they were the slaves

of sin. By tacitly comparing the former state of believers with their present, Paul emphatically attacks the calumniators of the grace of Christ, since he shows the whole human race to be led captive by sin, when grace ceases to reign, and the dominion of sin to be destroyed by the active operation of divine grace. We are not, therefore, as a necessary consequence, freed from the bondage of the law for the purpose of sinning, since the law loses its authority where divine grace claims us as its own, with a view to renew righteousness in us ; and our subjection to the power of sin cannot possibly take place, because the grace of God reigns in our hearts, for, as we have already stated, the spirit of regeneration is comprehended under the word *grace*. *Ye have obeyed from the heart*—Paul opposes the secret power of the Spirit to the external letter of the law ; as if he had said, “ Christ forms our hearts in a more complete manner internally by his love, than the law can compel us by its threatenings and terrors.” This removes the calumny of those who maintain the licentiousness of sinning to be introduced by Christ freeing us from obedience to the law, since he does not send forth his followers to indulge in unbridled wantonness, and to exult, without moderation and sobriety, as horses, when set at liberty, gallop across the plains, but conducts them to a lawful course and manner of life. Erasmus, following the ancient translation, adopts *form*, while I use *type*, the literal expression of Paul. Some may, perhaps, prefer to translate it *pattern*, for I consider the apostle to signify the express image of righteousness engraved on our hearts by Christ. This corresponds to the precept and rule of the law, according to which all our actions are to be formed and fashioned, without turning aside to the right hand or the left.

*Being then made free from sin*—It is absurd for

any one to remain in bondage after he has gained his liberty, for he ought to maintain the state of freedom bestowed upon him ; nor is it consistent with the character of believers to be brought under the power of sin, from which they have been emancipated by Christ. This argument is taken from the efficient cause, and the following from the final : “you are delivered from the bondage of sin, that you may enter the kingdom of righteousness, on which account it is your bounden duty to forget all sin, and to turn your whole heart and soul to righteousness, under whose obedience you are now brought.” It must be observed that none can devote himself to the service of righteousness, unless he has first been delivered by the power, kindness, and favour of God, from the tyranny of sin, as Christ himself testifies, (John viii. 36 :) “ If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” What preparations then for divine grace shall we derive from the power of the freedom of the will, if the commencement of our goodness arises from that emancipation which the grace of God alone performs ?

19 I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh : for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

*I speak after the manner of men*—Paul means that he speaks after the manner of men with respect to form, not the subject matter, as Christ (John iii. 12) says, “ If I have told you earthly things,” when he is, however, discoursing on heavenly mysteries, but not with so much majesty as the dignity of the subject demanded, because he accommodated himself to the capacity of a rude, dull, and slow people. The

apostle, by this preface, more fully proves the great wickedness and grossness of the calumny, which pretends and imagines a licentiousness to be granted for sinning by the liberty that Christ hath procured for his people. He, at the same time, also instructs believers, that there is no greater absurdity, or rather dishonour and shame, than for the spiritual grace of Christ to be inferior to an earthly emancipation in its power over their conduct. As if the apostle had said, “I could show, by instituting a comparison between righteousness and sin, with how much greater vehemence and zeal you ought, with all speed, to enter the service of the former than to obey the latter; but I spare your infirmity, and omit the adopting of such a plan. I may, however, showing you the utmost indulgence, justly demand of you not to practise righteousness, on any consideration, in a more cold or negligent manner than you have subjected yourselves to the dominion of sin.” He means more than meets the ear, for he exhorts them to obey righteousness with so much greater earnestness as its dignity is much superior to that of sin, though his expressions do not seem to warrant the full extent of this sense. *For as you have yielded—* Your wretched bondage and devotedness to the affections of your flesh was clearly apparent from the readiness with which all your limbs and members paid obedience to the power of sin: let your alacrity and promptitude be equally striking in performing the commands of God; nor let your activity in doing good actions be inferior to your former conduct in sinning. The apostle does not, as in 1 Thess. iv. 7, observe the order of the antithesis in opposing uncleanness to holiness, but the sense is evident. He considers, in the first place, two kinds of sins, uncleanness and iniquity; the former is opposed to chastity and holiness, the latter is considered in

relation to injuries inflicted upon our neighbours. In the second place, he repeats the word *iniquity* twice in a different sense; in the former passage, it means pillage, frauds, perjuries, and injuries of every description; in the second, universal depravity and corruption of life and manners: as if he had said, "You have prostituted your members to the commission of abandoned crimes, that the kingdom of iniquity might reign in you." I interpret *righteousness* to mean the law and rule of living righteously, the end of which is sanctification, that believers may indeed devote themselves entirely, purely, and simply, to the service of God.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*For when ye were the servants*—He repeats the disagreement already mentioned between the yoke of righteousness and sin, which are so contrary in their character, that whoever devotes himself to one must necessarily forsake the other. His object is, that by examining them separately we may more clearly see what is to be expected from both, for a just distinction gives greater light in investigating the character of any thing. After carefully considering the difference between sin and righteousness, he points to the consequences which may be expected to result from each. The apostle, it must be remem-

bered, argues from contraries in the following manner : " While you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness ; but now, on the other hand, it is your duty to be the servants of righteousness, because you are delivered from the yoke of sin." He calls those free from righteousness, who are under no restraint or check of obedience for the purpose of practising it, since the licentiousness of the flesh so emancipates us from obedience to God, that we become the slaves of the devil. Wretched, therefore, and cursed is that liberty which, with an unbridled, or rather furious violence, exults even to our ruin.

*What fruit have you then*—Paul could not express his meaning more forcibly than by appealing to their consciences, to make them confess the shame which they felt in their character when out of Christ. For when the pious begin to be illuminated by the Spirit of Christ and the preaching of the gospel, they condemn, of their own accord, the whole of their past life, which they had spent out of Christ ; and so far are they from endeavouring to excuse their past conduct, that they are rather ashamed of themselves. Nay, they constantly recall to mind the recollection of their disgrace, that, being thus ashamed, they may be more sincerely, readily, and with heart and mind, humbled before the Lord. Nor does the apostle say, *whereof you are now ashamed*, without its use; for he intimates the blindness of our self-love, under which we suffered, when we were so completely involved in the darkness of our sins, as not to consider the extent of filth and uncleanness in which we were sunk. The light of the Lord alone can open our eyes to be able to behold the foulness concealed and lurking in our flesh. Whoever, therefore, has been taught to be dissatisfied with himself in real earnest, and to be confounded with shame and bashfulness

on account of his own wretchedness, has been then only imbued and furnished with the first elements of Christian philosophy. At last he judges also more evidently from the consequence, how much believers ought to be ashamed when they understand that they had been on the precipice of death, and the brink of ruin, nay, had now actually entered the gates of death, unless they had been drawn back by the mercy of God.

*You have your fruit unto holiness*—As Paul had before proved sin to terminate in two awful conclusions, so he now shows righteousness to be productive of two most blessed results. Sin in the present life produces the torments of an evil conscience, and afterwards eternal death. We gather from righteousness the present fruit of holiness, and we hope for eternal life in a future world. These considerations, if we are not altogether sunk in stupidity, ought to produce in our minds a hatred and horror of sin, and a love and earnest desire of righteousness. I do not think, with some, that the apostle meant tribute; for, although death is truly the tribute we pay to sin, yet it cannot be applied to the other member of the sentence, for life cannot be said to be the tribute of holiness.

*For the wages of sin*—Some consider that Paul wishes to heighten the unpleasant character of the wages given to sinners, by comparing death to the food allotted to soldiers, for the Greek word is occasionally taken in this sense. The apostle seems rather to make indirect allusion to the blind appetites of those, who are allured to their own destruction by baits of sin, as fishes by a hook. It is a more simple sense to understand it for wages; and death is certainly a reward merited by the reprobates. It forms the conclusion, and, as it were, epilogue of the last sentence; nor does he repeat the same idea

again in different words without a reason, for he was desirous to render sin more detestable by doubling the terror with which it is accompanied. *But the gift of God*—Some consider righteousness to be the subject, and the *gift of God* the predicate in this proposition, and translate it, *eternal life is the gift of God*; but this sense entirely destroys the antithesis. Sin, as the apostle shows, produces only death; the gift of God, by our justification and sanctification, he now adds, procures for us the happiness of eternal life. As sin is the cause of death, so righteousness, the gift of Christ, restores eternal life to believers; and it follows from this, as a most certain conclusion, that our salvation is wholly to be ascribed to the grace and mere kindness of God. Were this not true, he might have said the wages of righteousness is *eternal life*, making one member of the sentence to correspond with the other; but he was fully satisfied that we obtain *eternal life* as a *gift of God*, and not our own merit. Nor is this one simple gift; for, being clothed with the righteousness of the Son, we are reconciled to God, and regenerated to holiness by the power of the Spirit. He added, *in Christ Jesus*, for the purpose of removing from our minds and hearts every opinion of our own peculiar and proper dignity.

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## CHAPTER VII.

1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be

dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Although he had given a sufficient but brief solution to the question concerning the abrogation of the law, yet, on account of its difficulty and many other questions which might arise from its discussion, he considers, more at length, in what way the law is abrogated with respect to us. He then shows the great good arising to believers from its abrogation; for, while we are held bound to the demands of the law out of Christ, it can only condemn us. He next considers and refutes the objections of the flesh, to prevent any one from bringing accusations against the law itself, where he treats, in a remarkable passage, with great elegance concerning the use of the law.

*Know ye not, brethren*—As a general proposition, it is laid down by Paul that the law is made with no other design, and for no other end, than to regulate our conduct during the present life; it has no place and authority among the dead; and to this position he afterwards subjoins the hypothesis, that we are dead to the law in the body of Christ. Others understand the power of the law for restraining us to remain, while its use is in force. But, since this view of the passage is not so plain nor so well adapted to

the hypothesis which immediately follows, I prefer the sentiments of those who confine the expressions to the life of man, and not to the continuance of the law. By proposing the question, he increases the energy with which he asserts the certainty of his statement; for he shows it to be neither new nor unknown, but acknowledged equally by all. *For I speak to them that know the law*—This parenthesis must be referred to the same subject with the proposition: as if the apostle had said, “I know assuredly your acquaintance with the law to be such as leaves no doubt on your minds relative to the point under consideration.” And though both the proposition and parenthesis might be applied generally to all laws at the same time, yet it is better to confine the subject, now discussed, to the law of God. It is childish to imagine, with some, that the knowledge of law is applied to the Romans, because a great part of the world was subject to their empire and laws; for Paul partly addresses the Jews, or other strangers, partly the common people, and men in obscure stations. He chiefly regards the Jews, in discussing the question, relative to the abrogation of the law. To prevent every appearance of his treating the subject in a captious manner, he shows that he assumes a vulgar and well-known principle, which must be certainly known to all those who had been educated from their childhood in the doctrine of the law.

*For the woman is bound to her husband*—He adduces this similitude for the purpose of proving us to be so freed from the law, that it retains, properly, and by its own right, no more power over us. And although he could have proved his proposition by other arguments, yet, as the example of marriage was well suited for the illustration of his subject, he introduced the comparison taken from matrimony, for

the purpose of confirming his statement. To prevent any reader from feeling perplexed, because the members of the sentence which are compared with each other do not correspond, we must remark, that the apostle designedly intended to remove the displeasure, which the adoption of too harsh an expression might produce, by a trifling inversion. The apostle, had he strictly observed the order of the comparison, would have said, the woman, after the death of her husband, is freed from the bond of marriage ; the law which, with respect to us, is in the state and condition of a husband, is dead to us, therefore we are delivered from its power. Had the apostle said, that the law was dead, he might have offended the Jews by the harshness of his language, which he alters a little, and uses the expression, *we are dead to the law*. Some commentators consider Paul to argue from the less to the greater ; but as I fear this interpretation may appear too forced, I give a preference to the former on account of its simplicity. The order of the argument is as follows :— A woman is subject by the law to her husband as long as he lives, so that she cannot take another ; after his death she is delivered from the bond of the law, and can freely marry any husband she chooses. The comparison is thus applied by Paul. The law was in the place of a husband, by whose yoke we were bound, until it became dead to us. After the death of the law Christ took us, delivered us from the law, and joined us to himself. We, therefore, being married to Christ, who is raised from the dead, ought to cling to him alone ; and, as the life of Christ is eternal after his resurrection, we shall never be divorced any more from our Saviour. The word *law* is taken in various senses : sometimes it means the mutual law of marriage ; on other occasions, the power of a husband, to whom the wife is subject ;

in some passages, the doctrine of Moses. We must keep in mind, that Paul alludes here only to such part of the law as peculiarly belonged to the ministry of Moses. For we must never dream of the abrogation of the law with respect to the ten commandments, in which God has taught us our duty, and appointed us a rule for the conduct of our lives, because the will of God ought to continue and flourish for ever. Let us, therefore, carefully remember, this is not a release from the righteousness taught in the law, but from its rigorous demand, and that curse which follows the strictness of its sentence. The rule of a good life, therefore, prescribed by the law, is not abrogated; but that quality which is opposed to the liberty purchased by Christ, and demands the utmost perfection, and, because we do not attain it, binds us under the guilt of eternal death. The apostle, not being desirous to state the causes on account of which a woman is delivered from the power and authority of her husband, had no wish to determine the law of matrimony. It would, therefore, be vain to seek here for any certain doctrine on this subject.

*By the body of Christ*—Christ, in the first place, triumphed over sin by erecting the standard of his cross, and for this purpose it was necessary that the hand-writing, by which we were bound, should be torn in pieces. The law is that hand-writing, whose force, when exerted, makes us debtors to sin, and it is therefore called the power of sin. By the abrogation, therefore, of this hand-writing, we are delivered from the law by the body of Christ, when it was fixed to the cross. But the apostle goes farther, and states the bond of the law to have been broken; not that we might live according to our own will, as the widow, while she lives unmarried, is subject only to her own authority; but we have now been bound

to another husband, nay, we have passed from one hand to another, from the law to Christ. He also mitigates the severity of the sentence, when he says, that Christ has delivered us from the yoke of the law for the purpose of ingrafting us into his own body. For although Christ voluntarily subjected himself for a time to the law, yet it is not right that the law should have dominion over him. He also communicates the liberty, which is peculiar to himself, to his own members. We need not, therefore, be surprised if he exempts the pious from the yoke of the law, whom he joins to himself by a sacred tie, that they may be one body with him. *To him who is raised from the dead*—We have already said that Christ is substituted in the place of the law, nor can liberty be conceived to exist out of him, nor dare any one effect a divorce from the law, who is not already dead to himself. Paul uses this circumlocution to point out that eternal life, which Christ attained by the resurrection, that his followers may thus know the endless duration of his union with them. Paul speaks more clearly in the 6th chapter of the Ephesians, concerning the spiritual marriage of Christ with his church. *That we should bring forth fruit unto God*—Paul always adds the final cause, that no believer might take this as a pretext for licentiousness by indulging his flesh, or its desires and lusts, because Christ has emancipated us from the slavery of the law; for he hath offered us with himself a sacrifice to his Father, and regenerates us for this very end and purpose, that we should bring forth fruit unto God by the newness of our life. Sanctification and righteousness are, we know, the fruits demanded of us by our heavenly Father. Nor, if we are the servants of God, does that detract any thing from our liberty. Nay, if we wish to enjoy so great a blessing as Christ, our whole thoughts must be engaged in pro-

moting God's glory, on which account Christ took us to himself. If we pursue a different conduct, we remain the slaves, not only of the law, but of sin and death.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held ; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

*For when we were in the flesh*—Paul points out, in a still more clear manner by the contrast, how vainly the zealots of the law wish to keep believers subject to its power. For while the doctrine of the letter of the law reigns and is in force, without the Spirit of Christ, the wantonness of the flesh, so far from being restrained, boils up with greater force ; the kingdom of righteousness, therefore, it necessarily follows, is only established when Christ emancipates us from the law. Paul, at the same time, acquaints us with the works which it becomes us to practise when delivered from the power of the law. While man, therefore, is kept under the yoke of the law, he can procure nothing for himself but death, by his constant practice of sinning. If the slavery of the law produces sin only, emancipation, which is opposed to bondage, ought to lead to righteousness ; if the former conducts to death, the latter must confer life upon believers. Let us, however, carefully weigh and consider the words of Paul. He says we have been in the flesh, when he is desirous to describe our state during the time we were under the dominion of the law. Hence we understand, that all those who are under the law, have only their ears stunned with

the external breath used in speaking of its prohibitions and requisitions, without any fruit or advantage arising from what they hear, since they are destitute of the internal Spirit of God. They must, therefore, necessarily remain sunk in vice and frowardness, until they discover a better remedy for the healing of their disease. Observe also the common scriptural expression, *to be in the flesh*, which is used instead of "our being endowed with the alone gifts of nature, while the peculiar grace is wanting, which God condescends to bestow on his own elect." If, moreover, this whole state of life is spent and employed in vice, it is undoubtedly evident that no part of our mind and inclination is, by nature, in a sound and faultless state, and the freedom of our will is only possessed of the power of sending forth, in every direction, our depraved and abandoned affections as weapons of destruction. *The motions of sins, which were by the law*—The law excited our depraved affections, which exerted their power in every part of us, for there was no limb that was not the slave of depraved passions and dispositions. The work of the law, if we do not possess the Spirit, our internal Master, is to inflame the workings of our hearts still more, and make them boil over in inordinate desires. Paul compares here the law with the corrupt nature of man, whose perverse character and lust rush forth with still greater fury in proportion to the number of the restraints and checks imposed upon sin by righteousness. He again adds, while our carnal affections enjoyed the sovereignty under the law, they brought forth fruits unto death, and thus showed the law of itself to have been the cause of destruction. The madness of those who desire so earnestly a death-producing slavery, follows from our former statement.

*But now ye are delivered from the law*—He con-

tinues the argument from the contrast : “if the bond of the law rather excited us to sin than restrained the flesh from its own indulgences, we must necessarily be released from the power of the law, that we may cease from sinning. If we are, therefore, emancipated from the bondage of the law, that we may become the servants of God, all such as take a liberty for sinning from this cause, act with the greatest perverseness; and all teachers, who say the reins are in this way thrown upon the necks of our lusts, make a false and unfounded assertion. We are, it is worthy of being observed, then delivered from the law, when God imbues us with his Spirit, absolves us from the rigorous demand and curse of the law, and thus enables us to walk in his ways.” *That being dead*—This part is confined to the reasoning of the apostle, or rather hints at the manner by which we are liberated, namely, while the law is so far abrogated that we are not crushed with its intolerable burden, nor does its inexorable rigour bury us under its curse. *In newness of spirit*—Paul opposes the *spirit* to the *letter*, because before our will is formed by the Holy Spirit to the will of God, we have nothing in the law save its external letter, which bridles and restrains our outward actions, but by no means represses the fury of our lust. He attributes, indeed, *newness* to the spirit, because it comes in the place of the *old man*, as the letter is called *old*, which perishes by the regeneration of the Spirit.

7 What shall we say then? *Is the law sin?* God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.

*What shall we say then?*—Because it was said that we ought to be delivered from the law, for the purpose of serving God in newness of the spirit, the fault of impelling us, as it were, to sin, seemed to be inherent in the law. The apostle very justly engages in refuting this uncommon absurdity, when he asks the question, Is the law sin or not? he means, does it so create sin, that the blame and fault of the latter ought to be imputed to the former? *Nay, I had not known sin*—Sin, therefore, resides in us, not in the law; for its cause is the depraved desire of our flesh, and we attain a knowledge of it from our becoming acquainted with the righteousness declared to us in the law. We must not understand the apostle, as if he meant there was no distinction between right and wrong without the law: but that we are either too dull to perceive our own depravity, or are rendered entirely stupid, while we flatter ourselves in the indulgence of our inordinate desires. The statement of Paul, *I had not known lust*, is a declaration of the former sentence, in which he proves the ignorance of sin, whose character and nature he is examining, which consists in not perceiving its own lust. He intentionally dwells on one kind of sin, in which hypocrisy chiefly reigns, and supine indulgence and security are always connected with this vice. For mankind are never so deprived of understanding as not to make a distinction between different external actions, nay, they are compelled to condemn wicked councils and enterprises of vice, while they feel themselves under the necessity of bestowing due praise upon rectitude of heart and mind. But the vice of lust is more secret and deeply hidden, so that no account can be taken of it, while men judge from their own feelings. Nor does Paul boast of his freedom from lust; but he so indulged his own inclinations, as not to consider the vice

of inordinate desire lurking in his heart. For though he was deceived for a time, when he did not believe righteousness to be prevented by lust and covetousness, yet he at last understood himself to be a sinner, on finding concupiscence, from which no human being is free, to be prohibited by the law. Augustine says, Paul included the whole law in the word *covetousness*; this, if properly understood, is true. For when Moses shows the actions we must avoid, if we are desirous not to injure our neighbour, he subjoins the commandment against covetousness, which must be referred to all these duties. The lawgiver, undoubtedly, in the preceding commandments, condemned all depraved affections conceived in our minds; but there is a great difference between the deliberate wilful desire of the heart, and the appetites by which we are provoked and moved. God, therefore, in the tenth commandment, demands from us such strictness of integrity, that no vicious desire ought to solicit us to evil, even though we should not give our consent. This consideration induced me to observe, that Paul carries his view of this subject farther than the common understanding of mankind goes. Political laws, indeed, cry out that they inflict punishments on plots and councils, not merely on events; philosophers also, with still greater accuracy, place both vices and virtues in the mind; but God, by this precept, penetrates even to our very concupiscence, which is more concealed than the will and inclination, and on this account not considered to be a vice. Not only did it secure the pardon of philosophers, but the Roman Catholics contend that it is not sin in the regenerate. But Paul says, he detected his guilt from this latent disease, and it hence follows that no excuse can be offered for any of those who are under the influence of covetousness, nor can they

expect the pardon of their offence from any but God. A distinction, in the mean time, must be observed between depraved lusts, which secure the consent of the will, and covetousness, that provokes and affects the heart and inclination in such a manner, as to stop in the midst of its persuading and exciting to action.

*But sin, taking occasion by*—All evil, therefore, arises from sin and the corruption of the flesh; the occasion exists only in the law. And, though the apostle may appear merely to speak of that excitement by which our covetousness is incited by the law to boil up into greater madness, yet I chiefly refer it to knowledge: as if he had said, “the law detected in me all my concupiscence, which appeared, when concealed, not to exist.” I do not, however, deny the flesh to be more keenly stimulated by the law to concupiscence, and in this way, also, carnal desire is made manifest to the light, which might happen to Paul. But it appears to be more agreeable to the context to understand the passage of the manifestation of sin, since Paul immediately adds, *for without the law sin is dead.*

9 For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.  
10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*. 12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

*Without the law sin was dead*—Paul very clearly points out the sense of the former passage, for the expression he uses here implies that the knowledge of sin was buried without the law. This is a general

opinion, to which he adds his own example. I am surprised to find interpreters translating the tense in the preterimperfect, as if Paul was speaking of himself, though it is very evident that he commences with a universal proposition, and afterwards explains it by his own example.

*For I was alive without the law once*—Paul intimates that there was a time when sin was dead to himself, or with respect to his view of his own character. We must not understand from this, that the apostle lived at any time without the law, but he appeared to live, from the absence of the law; and, being inflated by the confidence of his own righteousness, arrogated life to himself, when, at the same time, he was dead. The sentence will appear clearer by resolving it in the following manner: “at one period, when I was without the law, I was *alive*.” I term this word emphatic, because he claimed life for himself by imagining that he was righteous; his meaning is, “when, laying aside all thought of the law, I committed sin, my transgression of the law was so lulled to sleep, that it appeared almost dead, in consequence of not observing its operations and effect. On the other hand, because I did not consider myself a sinner, I rested in my own character, and conceived that life had taken up its abode in me. For the death of sin is a man’s life, and, on the other hand, the life of sin his death.” But he proposes the question, during which period he confidently claimed life for himself through ignorance, or, as he terms it, absence of the law. For he was, undoubtedly, instructed from his childhood in the doctrine of the law; but it was the “theology of the letter,” which does not humble its disciples. For, as Paul says, (2 Cor. iii. 14,) a veil was interposed to prevent the Jews from seeing the light of life in the law; so he himself also, in some degree, when he wanted the

Spirit of Christ, had his eyes veiled, and rested satisfied with the external mask of righteousness. He therefore says, he was without the law, because, though he saw it with his eyes, he was not affected with a serious sense of the judgment of the Lord : the eyes of hypocrites are so covered with a veil, that they do not see the extent of the precept which prohibits us from coveting. *But when the commandment came*—He speaks of the commandment coming, when it began to be truly understood ; for it then called forth sin, as it were, from the dead, and disclosed to Paul the fountain of wickedness issuing from the inmost recesses of his heart, and at the same time killing him. Paul, we should never forget, is here speaking of the intoxicating confidence in which hypocrites rest, when they flatter themselves, and wink at their own vices.

*I found to be*—Two things are here stated : that the commandment shows us the way of life in the righteousness of God, and was given that we might, by observing the law of the Lord, obtain everlasting life, if not prevented by our own wickedness. But since none of us obey the law, but rather rush headlong with all our powers and combined exertions to follow that very course of life, from which we are recalled by its precepts, it necessarily brings only death, and this distinction must be made between the nature of the law and our own vice. The deadly wound, therefore, inflicted upon us by the law is evidently accidental, as if an incurable disease should be increased in violence by a salutary remedy. I acknowledge the accident is inseparable from the law, on which account it is called (2 Cor. iii. 7) “the ministration of death,” when compared with the gospel ; but we ought to have it fixed in our minds, that the law does not injure us by its own nature, but

our corruption excites and calls forth the denunciation of its curse.

*Deceived me*—The whole life of man, it must be granted, wanders from rectitude, and is full of errors, provided the will of God should be concealed from us, and no part of the doctrine of divine truth shine forth for our instruction. Nay, we cannot escape error, until the way of right living is pointed out to us by the law. Paul justly says, we are deceived, when sin is detected by the law; because we then begin at last to be sensible of our error, when the Lord has brought conviction to the mind by the loud voice of conscience. . We are said to be deceived, because the law opens our understanding, and makes us clearly acquainted with our great departure from a proper course of life, and sinners, who went on securely before, become wearied and displeased with themselves, since they know assuredly, when the foul and squalid nature and character of sin have been placed before them in the glass of the law, that their mad career of evil and unhallowed conduct was hurrying them on to the yawning jaws of death. He again impresses upon his readers the word *occasion*, with a view to convince us that the law does not bring forth death of itself, but from some other adventitious cause.

*Wherefore the law is holy*—Paul uses the two words, *law* and *commandment*, for the purpose of giving force and energy; and he means the law, and every precept it enjoins, is *holy*, and on this account must be reverenced with the greatest honour; *just*, and therefore no unrighteousness must be laid to its charge; *good*, and therefore pure, and free from every vice and every stain. He thus defends the law from every charge and accusation brought against it, so that none dare attack the commandment and

its requisitions, as containing any principle contrary to goodness, to righteousness, and to holiness.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me ? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good ; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

*Was then that which is good*—He has vindicated the law, in his former remarks, from all calumnies, in such a manner, that it continues doubtful whether it be the real cause of death. Nay, the human mind is greatly perplexed by considering how it is consistent for us to state that nothing but destruction arises from the striking and singular favour of God. Paul, in answering this objection, denies death to have been caused by the law, though sin, taking occasion by the commandment, introduced death. This answer contradicts not, though it may appear to do so, his former observation, that he had found the commandment, which was ordained to life, to be unto death. Paul, in the former passage, meant, that our depravity, by abusing the law, was the cause of our destruction, in direct opposition to the nature of the commandment ; and, in this verse, he denies the law to be the material cause of death, which ought not to be laid to the charge of commandments that are just and good. The apostle speaks more fully of the law, (2 Cor. iii. 7,) and calls it the ministration of death, as frequently occurs in controversy, for he is not there considering the nature of the law, but the false opinion of his adversaries. *Nay, sin, &c.*—I pass over the remarks of others, and adopt this reading in the following sense : “ Sin, before its detection by the law, is, in some

measure justified; but, on being revealed by occasion of the law, is denominated sin; and its wickedness, and, if I may be allowed the expression, sinfulness, then appears greater, because it perverts and changes the goodness of the law to our destruction." For sin must be of a very destructive character, which makes the demands of the law, that are in their own nature in every respect useful and beneficial, to become injurious. The law must detect the atrocity of sin, for this would never have been acknowledged, had it not burst forth with vast and dreadful enormity of excess, that spreads ruin and devastation in all directions, with greater violence, by changing the life, which the law is calculated to bestow, into all the horrors and agonies of death. In this case, therefore, all ground for excuse is completely removed."

14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

*For we know that the law* — He now begins to institute a more near comparison between the law and human nature, that it may be understood more clearly whence vice, which makes us subject to death, springs. He then proposes the example of a regenerate man, and in this case the law of the Lord so contends with the remains of the flesh, that the spirit willingly yields it obedience. But in the beginning, as we have said, he proposes a plain and simple comparison between nature and the law. Since there is no

greater disagreement in any thing pertaining to man than between the flesh and spirit ; the law is spiritual, man carnal, What agreement then has the nature of man with the law ? The same that light has with darkness. Paul, by calling the law spiritual, not only means that it requires the more intellectual affections of the heart, according to some commentators, but, by way of antithesis, opposes it to the word carnal. The former class of interpreters explain *the law is spiritual*, in the following manner : “ It not only binds the feet and hands, with respect to external works, but the affections of the heart are enjoined to obey it, and the sincere fear of God is exacted by its requisitions. The antithesis, let it be remembered, is still kept up between the flesh and spirit. The context also will make it sufficiently plain ; and it has, in some measure, been before proved, that the flesh includes whatever men bring with them from the womb. Flesh means the character which man has from his birth, and while he retains his natural disposition ; because, as vice clings to all his thoughts, inclinations, and actions, so grossness and earthliness distinguish all his wisdom, and all the breathings of his soul. The spirit, on the contrary, is called the renewing of our corrupt nature, by which the Fountain of all love transforms us into his own image. This manner of speaking is adopted, because the gift of the Spirit is that newness of life which is formed anew in us. The perfection of the doctrine of the law is therefore opposed to the depraved nature of man ; and this passage means, “ The law requires a certain heavenly and angelic righteousness, wherein no spot appears, and nothing is required to add to its cleanness ; but I, a carnal man, have no power but what consists in manifesting opposition to its commands.” It is waste of time to refute the opinion of Origen, which

was formerly approved by many. He says, the law is called spiritual by Paul, because the Scriptures are not to be understood in a literal sense. What has this to do with the subject in hand? *Sold under sin*—This sentence shows the power of the flesh when left to itself. For man, by nature, is no less a slave to sin than purchased slaves, who are abused by their masters, according to their will, in the same manner as oxen and asses. Thus we are so entirely driven about by the authority and power of sin, that our whole mind, our whole heart, and all our actions, are inclined to sin. I always except restraint, for we sin of our own choice, since it would not be sin if it was not voluntary. But we are so much devoted to sin that, of our own accord, we can do nothing else than commit iniquity, because we are hurried off by the wickedness which reigns in us. This similitude, therefore, does not imply, as it is called, a forced restraint, but voluntary obedience, to which we are devoted by an innate bondage.

*For that which I do I allow not* — Paul now descends to a more particular example of a man already regenerate, in which the two objects aimed at by him more distinctly appear, namely, the great difference between the law of God and the nature of man, and how impossible it is for the law to produce death of its own accord by its own power. For since carnal man rushes into the lust of sinning with the whole bent and inclination of his soul, he seems to sin with as free a choice as if he enjoyed the power of laying a restraint upon his own conduct. The very destructive opinion has generally been every where adopted, “that man, by his own natural powers, can choose both good and evil, without the assistance of divine grace.” But while the will of a believer is driven on to good by the Spirit of God,

the depravity of nature is clearly manifested by the obstinacy with which it resists and opposes virtue. A regenerate man, therefore, supplies the most appropriate example by which the great disagreement of our nature with the righteousness of the law may be known. The impossibility of the law producing death by itself, is thus more properly proved than by the mere considération of human nature. For the law, because it produces death alone in a man entirely carnal, is more easily accused in that respect, since it is doubtful whence vice may arise. It is evident, by producing salutary fruits in a rege-nerate man, that the flesh only opposes the quickening power of the law, so far is it from causing death by its natural tendency. For the purpose of understanding the whole of this controversy, with more certainty and fidelity, it is worthy of remark, that the warfare mentioned by the apostle does not exist in man until he has been sanctified by the Spirit of God. For man, left to his own nature, is entirely hurried on to lusts without any opposition. For though the wicked are pricked by the stings of conscience, and are unable so to sooth themselves in their vices, as not to feel some taste of bitterness, yet you cannot hence infer that they either hate evil or love good. God only permits them to endure such torments, that he may, in some measure, convince them of his judgment, but does not affect them with a love of righteousness, or a hatred of sin. The great difference between the believers and unbelievers is, that the latter are never so blinded and hardened in their minds by sin as not to condemn, if they are accused, the perpetration of crimes by the proper judgment of their own conscience. For understand-ing is evidently not extinguished in them, but they can discern between vice and virtue; sometimes also they are so struck with horror on account of a

sense of their own evil conduct, as to exhibit an appearance of condemnation even in this life. They are, however, pleased with sin in their whole hearts, and, therefore, devote themselves to it without any real opposition, on the part of their affections, to iniquity and vice ; for the stings of conscience with which they are pricked spring rather from the opposite judgment, than the contrary affection of the will. On the other hand, the pious, in whom the regeneration of God has commenced, are so divided in their feelings as to breathe after God with the chief desire of their heart, to desire heavenly righteousness, and hate sin, but are again drawn back to earth by the remains of their flesh. In the midst of this state of distraction, they violently oppose their own nature, and feel themselves to be opposed by its power. Nor do they condemn their sins, compelled only by the judgment of reason, but detest them with a serious affection of the heart, and are displeased with their conduct in the commission of iniquity. This is the Christian warfare and struggle mentioned by Paul, (Gal. v. 17,) between the flesh and the Spirit. It has been, therefore, justly said, that carnal man rushes upon sin with the consent and agreement of his whole soul, and a state of separation from vice immediately then first commences, when he is called by God, and sanctified by his Spirit. For regeneration begins only in this life ; the remains of flesh that continue, always accompany their corrupt affections, and thus excite a warfare against the Spirit. The unskilful and inexperienced, who do not consider the nature of the question which the apostle is engaged in examining, or what plan of treating this subject is adopted by him, consider human nature alone to be here depicted. Such, indeed, is the description of the disposition and inclination of man given by philosophers.

But the philosophy of Scripture is much more profound, for it sees nothing but perverseness of character to have remained in the heart of man, since Adam was deprived of the image of God. The sophists also, where they want to define free will, or to estimate the power of human nature, quote this passage; but Paul does not, as already stated, here propose the simple nature of man, but describes, in his own person, the extent and nature of the infirmity of believers. Augustine was, for some time, involved in this common error; but, after a more close examination of this part of Scripture, he not only retracted his former erroneous doctrine, but, in his first book to Boniface, adduced many powerful reasons to prove that it could only be explained as relating to the regenerate. We also will endeavour to make our readers plainly acknowledge this to be the sense of the apostle. *I allow not*—He means that he does not acknowledge the works committed in consequence of the infirmity of the flesh to be his own, since he holds them in abhorrence and detestation. Erasmus, therefore, translated it tolerably well by *approve*, but, to prevent all ambiguity, I have rendered the word *understand*. It hence follows, that the doctrine of the law so agrees with right judgment, that believers reject its transgression as something brutish, and beneath the character of a reasonable being. Because Paul seems to acknowledge that his doctrine differs from the command of the law, many commentators have been deceived, and supposed him to have taken the character of another person; hence arose the common error, that Paul described in this entire chapter the inclination and disposition of the unregenerate man. Paul, by the transgression of the law, means all the falls of the pious, which neither drive out the fear of God, nor the desire of pursuing a course of right conduct. He says, there-

fore, that he does not perform all the requisitions of the law, because he does not obey it in all its parts, but in some measure faints in his efforts.

*For what I would, that do I not—* We must not understand this passage as if Paul was constantly unable to fulfil any goodness, but he only complains of his inability to perform his desire of pursuing goodness with due cheerfulness, because he is in some measure held in bonds; he fails also when his will is by no means inclined to act improperly, because he halts in consequence of the weakness of the flesh. The pious heart does not perform the good it desires, since a proper activity does not urge on the performance of a requisite duty; it does the evil which is opposed to its will, because, though eager and desirous to stand, it falls, or at least wavers, and is inconstant. We must, however, refer desires and aversions of it to the Spirit, which ought to hold the chief place in the affections of the faithful. The flesh, also, has its own will, but Paul calls the *will* what he desired with the principal affection of the heart, and every thing contending with this desire is denominated contrary to his will. We may hence deduce our former conclusion, that Paul is here discoursing of the faithful, in whom some grace of the Spirit flourishes, to illustrate the consent of a sound mind with the righteousness of the law, because the hatred of sin does not belong to the flesh.

*If then I do that which I would not, I consent to the law—* “My heart, while it acquiesces in the law, and is delighted with its righteousness, which certainly takes place where the believer hates transgression and sin, feels and confesses the goodness of the law in this case, so that we may be sufficiently convinced, even by the teaching of experience, that no evil is to be imputed to the law; nay, it would be the cause of salvation to men if it fell upon right and pure

hearts." This consent to the law is not to be taken in the sense used by unbelievers, when they say, " I behold and approve of a better line of conduct, but pursue a worse ;" and, " I will follow plans calculated to injure me, and avoid what I believe to be useful." For they act by constraint, since they subscribe to the righteousness of God, from which they are otherwise altogether alienated ; but the pious consents also with a serious and very ready desire of his heart, because he would choose a speedy departure to heaven in preference to any thing else.

*Now then, it is no more I that do it*—It is not the importunate entreaty of a person excusing himself, as if he was without fault, which is the conduct of many triflers, who consider they produce a just defence for covering their transgressions and crimes by casting all the blame upon the flesh ; but a testimony afforded to the very striking disagreement between spiritual affection and the flesh of the believer ; for they are hurried away by so great a fervour of the Spirit to obey God, that they deny their own flesh. This passage clearly proves Paul is disputing concerning none but the pious, who are now regenerated. For man, while he continues like himself, whatever his character may be, is justly considered to be vicious. But Paul asserts, he is not wholly engaged in sin, nay, he exempts himself from its bondage, as if he had said, " sin resides only in some part of his soul, while he struggles with the serious affection of his heart, and aspires after God's righteousness, and proves, in reality, that he carries the law of God inscribed in his inmost feelings and desires."

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing : for to will is present with

me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

*For I know*—Paul says no good dwells in him with respect to his nature. *In me*, means the same as if he had said, what proceeds from me. In the beginning of this paragraph he condemns himself as wholly sunk in depravity, when he confesses that no good dwells in him. He afterwards corrects himself, lest he should dishonour the grace of God, which also dwelt within him, but was no part of his flesh. And in this passage he again confirms the interpretation, which considers him not to be speaking of mankind in general, but only of believers, who are divided in their own feelings, reasonings, and views, on account of the remains of the flesh, and the grace of the Spirit. For why does he correct himself, if some part is not free from vice, and, therefore, not carnal? Under the name *flesh*, he comprehends all the powers of human nature, and every thing complete and entire in man, except the sanctification of the Spirit. The word *spirit*, usually opposed to the flesh, signifies that part of the soul which the Spirit of God has purified from evil, and so transformed, that the image of God shines forth in the affections, desires, and faculties of the mind. Both these names, therefore, *flesh* and *spirit*, suit the soul; but one relates to that part which is regenerated, and the other to the natural affections. *To will is present with me*—He does not mean that he has nothing but an ineffectual velleity and desire, but he asserts the efficacy of the work does not correspond to the will, because the flesh

hinders him from exactly performing what he is engaged in executing. What follows,—*to do the evil which he would not*, must also be taken in the same sense, because the faithful are not only hindered from running speedily by their own flesh, but it also opposes many obstacles against which they stumble; and they do not, therefore, perform their duty, because they do not engage in it with becoming alacrity. The *will*, therefore, here mentioned, is the readiness of faith, while the Holy Spirit forms the pious to be prepared, and zealous in employing their time to perform obedience to God. But Paul, because his power is unequal to the task, asserts, he does not find what he was wishing to attain,—the accomplishment of his good desires. The following confession relates to the same subject,—*that he does not perform the good which he desired, but rather the evil, contrary to his will*; because, indeed, believers, though animated with a proper spirit, consider, from a consciousness of their own infirmity, none of their works to be free from blame. For since Paul does not, in this passage, treat of a few faults of the pious, but points out the whole course and tenour of their lives in general, we infer their best works to be always polluted by some stains of vice, so that no reward can be expected unless bestowed by the pardoning mercy of God. He at last repeats, that he is a faithful witness, and subscribes to the righteousness of the law, and this view of the commandments more fully influences his life and conversation in proportion to the heavenly light which is bestowed by the Spirit. Hence it follows, if the integrity of our nature were pure and perfect, that the law would not be productive of death, nor, of its own accord, opposed to a person of a sound mind, who abhors evil. Since, however, this is not the case, health proceeds only from a heavenly Physician.

21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

*I find, therefore*—Paul, in this passage, imagines a four-fold law. The law of God, which alone is properly so denominated, because it is the rule of righteousness, by which our life is justly and correctly formed. He joins to this the law of the mind, meaning the inclination of the faithful soul to obey the divine law, which is a certain conformity of our own character and conduct with God's law. On the other hand, he opposes to this the law of unrighteousness; and, by a certain allusion, thus denominates the power which iniquity has not only in a man, yet unregenerate, but in the flesh of the regenerate. For the edicts of tyrants, however iniquitous and most regardless of justice, are termed, though improperly, and by the abuse of language, laws. Paul makes the law of the members, or lust existing in the flesh, correspond to this law of sin, on account of the agreement which it has with iniquity. With respect to the first part of the sentence, because many commentators take the name *law* in its proper sense, a preposition is understood, and Erasmus translates it *by the law*, as if Paul had said, that under the guidance, direction, and power of the law, he found vice to be innate, and to exist from his very birth. Without understanding any preposition, the sentence will be sufficiently clear: “While believers struggle to attain virtue, they find in themselves a certain tyrannical law, because a vicious propensity, directly opposed to the law of

God, and resisting its demands, is fixed and seated in their very marrow and bones."

*For I delight in the law of God*—You here, therefore, see the divided state of the minds of believers, from which the contest between the spirit and flesh arises, elegantly termed by Augustine, *the Christian warfare and combat*. The law of God invites man to the rectitude of justice ; iniquity, which is, as it were, the tyrannical law of Satan, impels to wickedness. Man, thus distracted by various wills, assumes now, in some measure, a two-fold character ; but since the spirit ought to hold the dominion, he determines and judges of himself chiefly from this part. Paul, therefore, says he is bound a captive by his flesh, because it is still moved and affected by depraved lusts ; and this may be considered constraint with respect to spiritual desire, which entirely resists its power. But we ought diligently to observe the sense annexed to *the inner man* and the *members*, for many have stumbled in consequence of not properly understanding these expressions. *The inner man*, therefore, does not simply mean the *soul*, but its spiritual part, which is regenerated by God ; the word *members* points out the other remaining part. For as the soul is the more excellent part of the man, and the body the inferior, so the spirit is superior to the flesh. In this way, therefore, "because the spirit holds the place of the soul in man when regenerated, and the flesh, or the corrupted and vitiated soul, is seated in the body, the former is termed *the inner man*, and the latter *the members*." The inner man is understood in a different sense, (2 Cor. iv. 16,) but the circumstance of the present passage necessarily requires the interpretation which I have here given. It is called *inward*, by way of excellence, because it possesses the heart and hidden affections, while the appetites of the flesh wander in

various directions, and are, as it were, without the man. Or it is certainly the same as if any one should compare heaven with earth, for Paul intends, by the word *members*, in a contemptuous sense, whatever appears in man; with a view to show more clearly and fully, that our secret renewal and regeneration avoid and are concealed from our senses, unless so far as they are apprehended by faith. Since the *law of the mind* undoubtedly signifies well-regulated inclination, there is an evident perversion of this passage if it be applied to the unregenerate; for Paul informs us that this class of the human race is devoid of well-ordered minds, because the desires and passions of their souls are degenerated from reason.

— 24 O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? 25 I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

*O wretched man*—He concludes the dispute with an exclamation full of vehemence, by which he teaches us that we must not only struggle with our flesh, but deplore by continued groanings with ourselves, and in the presence of God, our own unhappiness. He does not, indeed, ask by whom he is to be liberated, as if in doubt, like unbelievers, who are ignorant of there being one deliverer alone; but it is the language of one panting and almost fainting, because he does not behold a present help sufficient to accomplish his rescue from sin. On this account he used the word *delivered*, to express the uncommon power of God necessary for effecting this deliverance. He calls the body of death the mass of sin, or the lump from which the whole man is formed,

except that in him those remains only continued by the bonds of which he was kept a captive. I translate it, with Erasmus, *this body*, though the pronoun agrees well with *death*, but nearly in the same sense, for Paul wished to teach the following doctrine :—“ That the eyes of the sons of God were opened to discern with wisdom, from the law of infinite holiness, the corruption of our nature, and the death which it occasions.” But the term *body* means the same with *the outward man* and *members*; because Paul observes, “ that man’s departure from the law of his creation was the origin of vice, and he thus became, in all his feelings, affections, and desires, fleshly and earthly. For, although man still surpasses brute animals, he is deprived of true excellence; what remains is full of numberless corruptions, and his soul is so far degenerated that it may justly be said to have passed into the body. Thus God, in Moses, (Gen. vi. 3,) “ My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he also is flesh;” where he deprives the human race of spiritual excellence, and dishonours the descendants of Adam by comparing them with the beasts. This passage of Paul is strikingly calculated to break down and destroy all the glory of the flesh, for it shows that all, even the most perfect, while they dwell in the flesh, are subject to misery, because they are liable to death; nay, when they examine themselves with the greatest care, they see nothing in their nature except misery. To prevent their indulging slothfulness, Paul rouses them, by his own example, to anxious groans and sighs; and orders them, during their sojourning on earth, to desire death as the only remedy on which he relied for terminating his own evil; and this is, indeed, the proper and legitimate end and design for their desiring death. For despair often drives the wicked to form the same wish; but they have a foolish

longing for death, rather from a disgust of the present life than weariness on account of their iniquity. Besides this, believers, though they aim at the proper mark, are not hurried on to desire death with an unbridled impulse, but submit themselves to the will of God, to whom we ought to devote our life and death; on this account, they do not rage with indignation against God, but cast, with prayer and supplication, their anxieties and perplexities into his bosom; for they do not so settle down in the thought of their misery as not to temper their grief with joy, from the remembrance of the grace which they have received. The following sentence confirms this view of the passage.

*I thank*—Paul immediately subjoined this thanksgiving, that none might suppose he obstinately railed against God in his complaint. For we know how ready we are to fall into murmuring and impatience, even in grief which we justly deserve. While Paul, therefore, laments his state and groans for an issue to his misery, yet he confesses, at the same time, that he rests in the grace of God. For the saints, while they examine their defects, ought never to forget what they have already received from God. The thoughts of their being so received under the protection of God that they can never perish, and the conviction of their enjoying the first-fruits of the Spirit, which give them a certain and sure hope of an everlasting inheritance, are sufficient to check all impatience, and to cherish tranquillity of mind. And though they do not yet enjoy the promised glory of heaven, yet, content with the measure of grace already attained, they never want a theme for joy and gladness. *I myself serve*—This short epilogue teaches that the faithful never reach the goal of righteousness during their abode in the flesh, but continue in their course until they are stripped

of their body. He again calls the mind, not the rational part of the soul, so celebrated by philosophers, but that part which is illuminated by the Spirit of God for the purpose of making advances in true wisdom and regulating the will ; for Paul, when he describes the regeneration, joins the understanding with the earnest and serious desire of the heart after holiness. Paul, by his statement that he had not attained perfect righteousness, acknowledges his devotedness to God to be polluted with much impurity ; while in this world, he is softly and slowly creeping on to endless glory. This striking passage affords a very clear refutation of the very ruinous doctrine of perfect purity maintained by the sect called Cathari. Some factious spirits are again endeavouring to renew, in our times, this ancient heresy.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

1 *There is*, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh ; 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

*No condemnation*—The apostle having stated the unceasing contest which the pious have with their flesh, resumes the subject of consolation already

alluded to, whose aid was so much required in their warfare. He observes, the pious, notwithstanding they continue to be held under the power of sin, and to be encompassed and besieged by it, are yet exempted from the dominion of iniquity, and from every curse of transgression, provided they live not in the flesh, but the Spirit. The apostle unites the consideration of three subjects—the imperfection of believers under which they always suffer, the indulgence and kindness of God in granting its pardon and forgiveness, and the regeneration of the Spirit: this is mentioned last to prevent every human being from boasting in a vain opinion, as if he was delivered from the curse of the law, while he continued in the mean time to indulge, without care or fear, in the gratification of his fleshly desires and appetites. As the carnal man, therefore, flatters himself in vain, if, wholly unconcerned about the amendment of his life and manners, he promises to escape unpunished under the pretext of this grace; so the trembling consciences of the pious enjoy an invincible defence, knowing for a certainty, that, during their continuance in Christ, they are out of all danger of condemnation. We will now consider the meaning of the particular expressions. *To walk according to the Spirit*, does not mean the complete and entire putting away of every carnal feeling, so that the whole life of the pious savours of nothing except an heavenly perfection; but implies the active and unceasing labour of believers in subduing and mortifying their flesh, that a zealous pursuit of piety may appear to reign in all their conduct. Such characters do not, he asserts, walk according to the flesh, because, wherever the fear of God flourishes in sincerity, it deprives the flesh of its power and dominion, though all its corruptions may not thus be abolished.

*For the law of the Spirit of life*—The meaning of the words must be carefully attended to, if we are desirous to understand the following proof of his last opinion. He improperly calls *the law of the Spirit* the Spirit of God, which so sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ, as not only to cleanse us from the blot and blemish of sin with respect to guilt, but to sanctify and renew us into a state of real purity. Paul adds, *life-giving*, for the genitive case, according to Hebrew phraseology, is used as an epithet; and it hence follows that those who direct the attention of any one merely to the letter of the law, condemn him to death. He contrasts with the law of the Spirit of life *the law of sin and death*, which he calls the power of the flesh, and its necessary consequence—the tyranny of death. The law of God is placed, as it were, between both, which, by teaching righteousness, cannot bestow it; nay, rather binds us by still stronger bonds to the slavery of sin and death. The law of God, according to the opinion of Paul, condemns men, because, during their continuance under the obligation of the law, they are oppressed by the bondage of sin, and thus arraigned as guilty of death. But the Spirit of Christ corrects the inordinate desires of the flesh, abolishes by this means the law of sin in us, and delivers, at the same time, from the guilt of death. The pardon, therefore, some may object, by which our sins are buried, depends upon regeneration: this is easily answered, for Paul is not assigning the cause, but only the manner of our being released and freed from guilt. The apostle asserts, we do not obtain forgiveness by the mere external teaching and doctrine of the law, but during our renewal by the Spirit of God, we are, at the same time, also justified by a gratuitous pardon, that the curse of sin may no longer fall upon us. The grace of regeneration, therefore, according

to the opinion here stated by Paul, must never be separated from the imputation of righteousness. I dare not, with some commentators, understand *the law of sin and death* to mean the law of God, on account of the too great harshness of the expression ; for although, by increasing sin; the law may produce death, yet Paul hath designedly, in a former passage, avoided the displeasure of the Jews by not using the word. I by no means, however, agree with the opinion of those who explain the *law of sin* to mean the lust of the flesh, as if Paul said, he had obtained a victory over it ; for, in my opinion, it will be sufficiently evident from a following passage that he speaks of gratuitous absolution, which procures us rest and peace with God. I do not choose, with Erasmus, to translate it *right* or *power*, for Paul has not without consideration made allusion to the law of God.

*For what the law could not do*—The apostle now follows with a more accurate polishing or illustration of the proof that the Lord hath indeed justified us in Christ by his gratuitous mercy, which the law could not possibly accomplish. We will carefully examine each part separately, on account of the great importance of the opinion. We may infer from the concluding clause, *who walk after the Spirit*, and not *after the flesh*, that the apostle is here treating of the gratuitous justification or pardon by which God reconciles us to himself. For why this addition, if Paul intended to teach that we are furnished with powers for overcoming sin by the Spirit of regeneration ? But it agrees very well with the context, after Paul has promised gratuitous remission of sins to the faithful, that this doctrine should be restricted to those who join repentance to faith, and do not abuse the mercy of God to the licentious indulgence of carnal desires. We must carefully consider the

cause assigned, for the apostle teaches how the grace of Christ can discharge and absolve us from guilt. The expression, *what the law could not do*, undoubtedly means defect or inability, as if Paul had said, that God had discovered a remedy by which the want of power on the part of the law was removed. Erasmus has translated the Greek particle, *in that part which*; but as I consider the apostle to be here assigning a reason, I have preferred to render it *because*; and though this sense, perhaps, is not to be met with in classical Greek writers, yet, since the apostle makes constant use of Hebrew phrases, my interpretation ought not to appear harsh, for sensible readers will certainly grant the cause of the defect and inability of the law to be pointed out, as we shall soon again state in our remarks on another passage. Erasmus, deceived by the copulative conjunction, which I conceive to have been added for the purpose of amplification, has, without any necessity from the context, supplied the principal verb *performed*. Some may perhaps approve of the conjecture of the Greek scholiast, who joins the expression *and for sin* to the former part of the context in the following sense, “God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin.” I have followed what I consider to be the genuine sense of Paul.—I now direct my attention to the subject itself. Paul plainly affirms that our sins were atoned for by the death of Christ, because it was impossible for the law to bestow righteousness upon us sinners. It hence follows, that more is commanded in the law than we are able to perform; for if our powers had been sufficient to fulfil the law, it would have been vain to seek for a remedy by some other means. On this account, it is absurd to measure human powers by the precepts of the law, as if God, in demanding what was just, regarded the extent, quality, and cha-

racter of our powers. *In that it was weak*—Paul hath expressly stated the defect of the law not to be any fault in itself, but in the corruption of our flesh, so that no person can consider the law to be in any respect dishonoured, because its inability is proved, or restrict the meaning of the apostle to ceremonial observances. It must indeed be confessed, that, should any one fully satisfy the law of God, he would be just in the presence of his Creator. He does not deny the power of the law to justify us with respect to doctrine, since it contains a perfect rule of righteousness; but the entire strength of the law decays or vanishes away, because our flesh does not attain that righteousness. The error, or rather the madness of those, who consider the ceremonies only to be deprived of the power of justifying, is refuted by this passage, since Paul expressly places the fault in ourselves, and declares that he finds nothing defective in the doctrine of the law. Besides, the Greek word used on this occasion does not imply a moderate share of weakness, but entire impotence, so as to signify that the law is not of the least weight in bestowing righteousness. We are, therefore, you see, entirely excluded from the righteousness of works, and we must on this account fly to the righteousness of Christ, because we ourselves can have none. This is particularly necessary to be known, since we can never be clothed with Christ's righteousness, unless we are first certain that we have no righteousness of our own. The word *flesh* is always used in the same sense, and signifies ourselves. The corruption of our nature, therefore, makes the law of God to be of no use to us, because, when it shows the path of life, it does not pluck us back from the precipice, although we are rushing into the very gulf of death. *God sending his own Son*—He now shows the manner by which our hea-

venly Father restores righteousness to us by his Son, namely, because he condemned sin in the very flesh of Christ; he abolished, as it were, our offence by destroying the hand-writing, which kept us bound in the presence of God. For the condemnation of sin has secured us righteousness, since we are so absolved by destroying our guilt, that God reputes us righteous. But, in the first place, he expressly states Christ to have been sent for the purpose of admonishing us that righteousness by no means resides in us, since it must be sought from him; and men confide in vain in their own merits, who are righteous only according to the will and pleasure of another; or they borrow righteousness from that expiatory sacrifice, which Christ fulfilled in his flesh. Paul says, Christ came *in the likeness of sinful flesh* because his flesh, although stained with no spots, had the appearance of being sinful, since it sustained the punishment due to our sins. And undoubtedly death exerted every part of its power upon the flesh of Christ, which was condemned to the sting of our last enemy. Secondly, because it was the duty of our High Priest to learn by his own experience what it is to afford assistance to the weak, Christ voluntarily underwent our infirmities, that he might be more inclined to sympathy, and in this part, also, a certain image of our own sinful nature appeared. *And for sin*—I said lately, that some explain this concerning the cause, end, or design, why God sent his Son into the world, namely, to satisfy for sin. Chrysostom, and many after him, annex rather a harsh meaning to this passage—that sin had been condemned by God for having violently seized upon Christ, in an unjust manner, and contrary to his deserts. I grant, the price of redemption was paid by a just and innocent person undergoing the punishment for sinners, but I cannot be induced to think

the name *sin* is taken here in any other sense than an expiatory victim, which means, both in Hebrew and Greek, a sacrifice on which the curse is laid. Thus the same Paul (2 Cor. 5. 21) says, “For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” The Greek preposition, generally translated *for*, means here *upon that sacrifice*, since sin was justly deprived of its power on account of the burden of sin which was laid upon Christ, that we might not now be condemned, and subject to its dominion. *Condemned* means, in a metaphorical sense, those who lose their cause, since God no longer receives, among the number of guilty, believers, for whom absolution has been purchased by the sacrifice of Christ. The kingdom of sin, under whose power we were oppressed, has now been destroyed ; Christ, therefore, received what was ours to himself, that he might transfer his own to us ; for he took upon himself our curse, and presented us with his own blessing. Paul adds here, *in the flesh*, to increase the certainty of our confidence, when we see sin to have been conquered and destroyed in this very nature of ours, for it hence follows that our nature has in reality become partaker of his victory, a truth which he afterwards also declares.

*That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled*—Commentators who, from this passage, understand believers renewed by the Spirit of Christ to fulfil the law, give a sense entirely different from that of Paul, for they, during their sojourning in the world, never make so great a progress that the righteousness of the law is complete and entire in the regenerate. We must therefore necessarily refer this to the pardon of our sins ; for when the righteousness of Christ is received and transferred to us, the law is so satisfied that we are considered just. For the per-

fection demanded by the law was exhibited in the flesh for this very reason, that its rigorous exaction might have no more power to condemn us. But because Christ communicates his righteousness to none but those whom the Spirit joins to himself by his own bond, regeneration is again added, lest Christ should be considered to be the minister of sin; as many violently wrest what is delivered in Scripture concerning the fatherly indulgence and tenderness of God to carnal wantonness, and others maliciously calumniate this doctrine, as if it extinguished all zealous endeavours after righteousness of life.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace: 7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

*For they that are after the flesh*—Paul adduces this distinction between the flesh and Spirit, not only to confirm by contrast what he had formerly stated—that the grace of Christ suits only those, who, being regenerated by the Spirit, earnestly study to walk in innocence of life; but also to strengthen believers by consolation adapted to their case, that they, from a consciousness of their many infirmities, might not faint or despond. For hope of salvation might appear to be completely taken away from the whole race of mortals, since Paul has exempted from the curse, none but those who lead a spiritual life. For who can be found in this world so adorned with

angelic purity as to be altogether unconnected with the flesh, and have no business with this spring of corruption? It was therefore necessary for the apostle to add a definition of his meaning, when he spoke of being in the flesh, and walking according to the flesh. Paul indeed does not use such accuracy of distinction at the commencement, for, as appears from the sequel, his plan is to inspire believers with good hope, though they yet continue bound to their flesh, provided they do not give the reins to its desires, but yield themselves up to the government of the Holy Spirit. When he says, they who are carnal do *mind*, or *meditate on the things of the flesh*, he proves that he does not regard as carnal such as aspire to heavenly righteousness, but the mere devotees of the world. The word translated *mind* proves all those to be excluded from the sons of God, who devote themselves to the allurements of the flesh, and apply their minds, earnest zeal, and labour, to depraved desires. He, in the other part of the sentence, encourages believers to entertain good hopes, if they feel their affections raised upwards to meditate on righteousness by the influence of the Spirit. For, wherever the Spirit reigns, there is a sign of the grace of God that bringeth salvation; as the grace of God, on the other hand, has no existence, where the kingdom of the flesh flourishes in its vigour, and the Spirit is extinct. I here briefly repeat what I stated before, that to be in the flesh, or to walk according to the flesh, and to be devoid of the gift of regeneration, mean the same thing. This is the character of all who continue, as it is generally termed, in a mere natural state.

*For to be carnally minded*—Erasmus translates it *affection*; the Vulgate, *prudence*. The meaning annexed to the Greek by the apostle must have been the same with that of Moses, (Gen. vi. 5,) *imagine-*

*tion of the thoughts of the heart*, which comprises all the sentiments and feelings of the soul; not only reason, understanding, intelligence, and knowledge, but the emotions, affections, and passions. The translation, *thought of the flesh*, is better suited to this passage than either of the two already mentioned. The illative particle, *for*, used by Paul, is merely confirmative, and the question at issue is thus more strongly conceded, because, after he has given a short definition of being in the flesh, he now subjoins the end, namely, *death*, which awaits all its votaries. He thus proves, by contrast, that all those who continue in the flesh, are incapable of the grace of Christ, as they march forward to death, and are carried thither during the whole course of their lives. We learn from this remarkable passage, that by the course of nature we rush headlong to death; for, of ourselves, we conceive and imagine nothing but what ends in destruction. He then shows, by contrast, that the Spirit exerts its power, provided any part of us advances forward to life, since not one spark of life would rise from the flesh. Paul calls the mind of the Spirit *life*, because it quickens, or leads to life. By *peace*, he, according to the Hebrew idiom, means all the parts of happiness. Every action of the Spirit of God in us tends to our happiness; but it is inconclusive reasoning to attribute our salvation on this account to works, since, notwithstanding God commences, and, by forming us to his image, finally finishes our salvation, yet the only cause of it is the good pleasure of his will, by which he makes us partakers of Christ.

*Because the carnal mind*—He here proves his position, that nothing indeed but death proceeds from the zealous, earnest labours and pursuits of our flesh, because they contend in hostile hatred with the will of God. But the will of God is the rule of

righteousness, and every thing, as a necessary consequence, which is at variance with this, is unrighteous, and at the same time deadly. In vain can any one expect life, when God is arrayed against him as an offended adversary; for death, which is the vengeance of his wrath, immediately, and of necessity, follows the indignation of the Most High. The will of man also, it is here worthy of observation, is in all respects opposed to the divine will; for we must necessarily be as much at variance with God, as depravity of inclination, disposition, or conduct, differs from rectitude and uprightness. *For it is not subject to the law of God*—He explains the last sentence, by stating in what manner all the meditations of the flesh are at war with the will of God; for it is impossible to find his will in any other place, than where a revelation of it is given by himself. For in the law he shows what affords him pleasure, and, on this account, all who are desirous to examine, in a right and proper manner, the goodness of the state in which they stand with God, try and measure all their plans, counsels, and pursuits, by this standard. “ For although no action takes place in the world without the secret providence of God overruling it, to assign this as a pretext for saying that nothing happens without his *approbation*, is insufferable blasphemy; and this cavil is adduced at this period by some mad fanatics. What folly is it to seek in some profound labyrinth for a distinction between right and wrong, which the law hath publicly, openly, and distinctly placed before our eyes. The Lord has indeed, as I have said, his own hidden and secret council, by which he orders all things according to his will; but we ought to know that we are debarred from too curious an investigation of this subject, since it cannot be comprehended by our finite understandings. . Let this, in the mean time, continue

fixed in our minds, that God is pleased with nothing but righteousness, nor can we form any proper judgment concerning our works except from the law, in which he has truly declared what conduct and actions are agreeable or displeasing to his unerring will." *Neither indeed can be*—Behold the power of the freedom of the will, which the sophists use every means to extol. Paul certainly here affirms, in express terms, what they detest with their whole heart, that it is impossible for us to subject our affections to the obedience of the law. They boast that the heart can be turned either way, provided assistance be afforded by the inspiration of the Spirit; we have in our power, according to them, the free choice of good or evil, if the Spirit only supply us with aid; to choose or refuse is our part. They imagine also good motions, by which we are prepared of our free will. Paul, on the other hand, declares our heart to be so swollen with hardness and unconquerable obstinacy, that it would never by nature bend itself to submit to the yoke of God. The apostle is not disputing concerning one or two of our affections, but he uses an indefinite expression, and casts into this bundle all the various emotions which arise from our hearts or understandings. Let the Christian, therefore, remove far from his breast the heathen philosophy concerning the freedom of the will. Let every one acknowledge himself to be, as he in reality is, the slave of sin, that, being emancipated by the grace of Christ, he may be delivered from its power. It is the height of folly to boast of any other freedom.

*So then they that are in the flesh*—I have explained the adversative particle as a causal one, and the reason is plain, for the apostle concludes from what has been already stated, that all those who give themselves up to the government of the lusts of the flesh, are abominable to God. Paul hath confirmed,

by his preceding reasoning, the opinion, that all who walk not according to the Spirit, are alienated from Christ, because they are devoid of the heavenly life.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

*But ye*—Paul applies, hypothetically, the general sentiment he maintains to the cases of those to whom his letter is written, not merely to influence them more powerfully, by directing his discourse peculiarly to themselves, but to enable them, from the definition just given, to draw a certain conclusion, that they belonged to the number of those, who have been delivered by Christ from the curse of the law. At the same time, however, Paul exhorts them to newness of life, by explaining the power of God in the elect, and the fruits he produces. *If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you*—He subjoins, suitably to his purpose, this correction of his hypothesis, to rouse them to a more close self-examination, that they may not make a vain pretence to the name of Christ. And the most certain and unerring sign and mark, by which the sons of God are distinguished from the children of the world, is their regeneration by the Spirit of God to innocence and holiness. His object does not appear to be so much the correcting of

hypocrisy, as the supplying of a subject for glorying against the preposterous and rash zealots of the law, who paid more regard to the dead letter, than the internal power of the Spirit, which quickens and animates the law. We are, moreover, taught by this passage, that Paul, by the word *Spirit*, had not, in the former part of this epistle, meant the mind or understanding, which the advocates of free will denominate the superior part of the soul, but the gift of the Comforter, which is bestowed by Heaven. For, according to his own explanation, those are spiritual whom God governs by his own Spirit, and not such as obey reason of their own proper influence. Nor are they said to be according to the Spirit, because they are filled with God's Spirit, for none ever yet enjoyed that blessing; but because they have him dwelling in them, although they still feel some of the remains of the flesh in their own nature, and the Spirit cannot dwell in believers without taking possession of the superior faculties; for man is so denominated, it must be observed, from reason, the principal part of his character. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*—Paul, by this addition, proves the necessity laid on Christians to deny and forsake the flesh. The kingdom of the Spirit is the destruction and extinction of the flesh: those in whom the Spirit has not established his kingdom do not belong to Christ: therefore the slaves of the flesh are not Christians. Christ, by being separated from his Spirit, is made to resemble a dead image or a corpse. We must always remember the advice of the apostle, that the gratuitous forgiveness of sins cannot be disjoined from regeneration, for Christ would thus, as it were, be torn in pieces. If this be true, it is astonishing to find the enemies of the gospel accusing us of arrogance, because we have the boldness to avow that

the Spirit of Christ dwells in us believers. For, without controversy, we must either deny Christ, or acknowledge we become Christians by his Spirit. It is indeed horrible to hear, that men have so departed from the word of the Lord, as not only to boast of their being Christians without the Spirit of God, but also to laugh at others for believing in his operation, and this is the philosophy of the Roman Catholics. Our readers may here observe the Spirit to be indifferently applied, on some occasions, to God the Father, and on others to Christ; because all his fulness is poured out on Christ as our Mediator and Head, that each of us believers may receive his own portion descending from this fountain of grace. The same Spirit is also common to the Father and the Son, since they have one essence, and the same eternal deity. Because, however, we have no communication with God but by Christ, the apostle wisely descends from the Father, who appears to be at a greater distance, to Christ.

*But if Christ be in you*—He now applies to Christ what he had before ascribed to the Spirit, signifying the manner by which Christ dwells in us; for as by the Spirit he consecrates us for temples to himself, so he resides in us by the same Comforter. He more distinctly also explains what we had already alluded to, that the sons of God are not reckoned spiritual from a full and entire perfection, but only on account of the newness of life, which has commenced its existence in their persons. He then anticipates a doubt, which might perplex and cause us uneasiness; for although the Spirit occupies one part of us, yet another is still kept under the influence of death. He answers, the power of quickening exists in the Spirit of Christ, which is able to absorb our mortality; and he hence infers the necessity of our waiting with patience until the remains of sin

shall be entirely destroyed. The word *Spirit*, as we have already stated, does not mean our soul, but the Spirit of regeneration, which Paul calls life, not only because he lives and flourishes in us, but quickens us by his lively power, until he destroys our mortal flesh, and at last perfectly renews our nature. By the word *body*, on the contrary, is meant the more gross mass, not yet purified by the Spirit of God from earthly pollutions, which feel and perceive nothing but grossness, for otherwise it would be absurd to attribute to the body the fault and blame of sin. Again, so far is the soul from being life, that it does not possess life in itself. Paul means, though sin condemns us to death according to the extent of the remains of the vicious character of our nature from Adam, yet the Spirit obtains the victory. No obstacle is presented to this conquest, because the first fruits of the Spirit have only been bestowed upon us, for even one spark from the Comforter is the seed of life.

*But if the Spirit*—He confirms the last passage from the efficient cause in the following manner: “If the power of the Spirit of God raised up Christ from the dead, and the Spirit retains eternal power, he will also exert the same in believers.” He takes it for granted, that in Christ’s person a testimony had been exhibited of power, which extends to the whole body of the church. He attributes to God a life-giving Spirit, by making him the author of the resurrection. *He that raised*—He describes God by a circumlocution, which suited his present purpose better than calling him simply by name. In the same way he ascribes to the Father the glory of Christ being raised from the dead, for this afforded a stronger proof of his proposition than by attributing the resurrection to Christ himself. For the objection might be formed, Christ was able to raise

himself by that power, which is entirely denied to all mankind. But when he says, "God raised up Christ by his Spirit, which he likewise communicated to you," no objection can be formed against it, since he has thus given us a sure hope of the resurrection. Nor does this derogate the least from the truth of the following passage, (John x. 18 :) "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." Christ certainly rose from the dead of himself and by his own power; but as he usually ascribes to the Father whatever divine power he possesses, so the apostle properly transferred to the Father what was in Christ, chiefly his own proper work. He moreover denominates *mortal bodies*, whatever yet remains in us subject to death, as he generally applies this name to our grosser part. Hence we conclude the apostle is not speaking of the last resurrection, which will take place in a moment, but of the continued operation of the Spirit, by which he mortifies, by degrees, the remains of the flesh, and renews in us a heavenly life.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

*Therefore, brethren*—It is the conclusion of the preceding remarks, that if we must renounce the flesh, we ought to refrain from its indulgence. If, again, the Spirit ought to reign in us, it is absurd not to depend upon his beck and will. One part of the antithesis is wanting in the apostle, namely, that

we are debtors to the Spirit ; but there is no obscurity in the sense. This conclusion has the force of exhortation, as Paul is always in the habit of drawing his exhortation from his doctrine ; thus, (Eph. iv. 30,) he admonishes us not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by which we are sealed to the day of redemption. Thus, (Gal. v. 25,) "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." This takes place when we renounce carnal desires, that we may devote ourselves to the righteousness of God, as to a state of active obedience. Such is the reasoning which a believer must adopt, and not, as some blasphemers are accustomed to do, speak foolishly, and babble about spending a life of idleness and inactivity, because we have nothing in our own power. By adopting such a line of conduct, we wage war, as it were, with God, since, by contempt and negligence, we extinguish his grace offered for our acceptance.

*For if you live after the flesh*—A threatening is added, for the purpose of removing from among them, with greater keenness, all slothfulness ; and this affords a good refutation of those who glory in the righteousness of faith without the Spirit of Christ. Their own conscience, however, sufficiently convicts them, since there is no confidence in God, where there is no love of righteousness. It is, indeed, true, that we are justified in Christ by the alone mercy of God ; but it is equally true and certain, that all who are justified, are called by the Lord to live worthy of their vocation. Let believers, therefore, hence learn to embrace Christ, not only for justification, but sanctification, as he is given for both purposes, that they may not tear their Redeemer by a mutilated faith of their own invention. *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body*—He thus moderates his opinion,

that the minds of the pious may not become dejected, who are still conscious to themselves of much infirmity. For although we are subject to sin, he promises us life, provided we pursue with zeal our exertions for mortifying the flesh. For he does not exactly require the death of the flesh, but only commands us to use our utmost efforts in subduing its lusts.

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God*—This affords a proof of the preceding opinion; for all, according to his doctrine, are finally reckoned the sons of God, who are regulated by his Spirit, since God acknowledges his own by this mark. The vain boasting of hypocrites is thus destroyed, who usurp the title without the reality, and the faithful are roused to an undoubted confidence of their salvation. To conclude the whole by a syllogism:

All who are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God :

All the sons of God, are the heirs of eternal life :

All who are led by the Spirit of God, are certain heirs of eternal life.

The minor premise, or assumption, is omitted, because its truth cannot be doubted. But it is proper to observe, that the action of the Spirit is various, for that is universal by which all creatures are supported and move; there are also peculiar and various actions of the Spirit in men, but Paul means *sanctification* in this passage, with which the Lord honours only his elect, while he sets them apart to himself as sons.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we

are the children of God : 17 And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Paul now confirms that certainty of confidence, in which he lately ordered believers to rest, from the special effect of the Spirit ; for he is not given to toss us to and fro with trembling and uncertainty, or to torment us with perplexity and anxiety, but rather to allay all our perturbations, to settle our minds in a state of tranquillity, and rouse us to an assured, free, and unrestrained calling upon God. He, therefore, not only pursues the argument already alluded to, but insists more extensively on the other branch of the subject, which he had joined at the same time with this, concerning God's fatherly indulgence, by which he pardons his people the weakness of the flesh, and the sins to which they are yet liable. He instructs us, that the Spirit of adoption gives us an assured belief of this fatherly kindness, since he would never inspire us with confidence in our prayers unless he first sealed a gratuitous pardon. And to illustrate this more fully, he speaks of a double Spirit ; he calls one the spirit of a legal bondage, derived from the prohibitions of the commandments ; the other, of evangelical adoption, conferred upon us by Christ Jesus. He says, the first was formerly given for fear, the last is at present bestowed upon us for confidence and security. The certainty of our salvation, which he wishes to confirm, evidently appears with greater clearness from such a comparison of contraries. The author of the Epistle to the

Hebrews uses the same comparison, (Heb. xii. 18,) when he says, we have not come to Mount Sinai, where all things were so dreadful that the people, dismayed, as if by the present denunciation of death, entreated that not a word should be addressed to them ; and Moses, according to his own confession, felt great fear ; but we have come to Sion, the mount of the Lord, to Jerusalem—the heavenly city of the living God, where is Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. The adverb *again* leads us to compare here the law with the gospel, for the Son of God brought us this inestimable blessing by his advent, that we should no longer be bound by the servile condition of the law. We must not hence infer either that none were endowed with the Spirit of adoption before Christ's coming, or that all who had received the law were slaves, not sons. For Paul rather compares the ministry of the law with the dispensation of the gospel, than persons with persons. I grant, indeed, that believers are admonished how much more liberally God has now acted with them than he formerly did with the fathers under the Old Testament ; he has, however, regard unto the external dispensation, in which respect only we surpass them ; for although the faith of Abraham, Moses, and David was more excellent than ours, yet so far as God kept them to all appearance under a schoolmaster, they had not attained the liberty now disclosed to us under the gospel. We must, at the same time, observe that an antithesis is designedly kept up, on account of the false apostles, between the disciples of the letter of the law and believers, whom Christ, their heavenly Master, not only addresses with the sound of his mouth, but powerfully teaches internally by his Spirit. And although the covenant of grace is contained in the law, yet Paul removes it from his consideration in this comparison,

because, in opposing the Mosaic dispensation to the gospel of Christ, he regards only what was peculiar to the law,—prohibition and command, and the restraining of transgressors by the denunciation of death; and he thus assigns the law that quality by which it is distinguished from the gospel. Or if any prefers the following explanation, he proposes the mere law, so far as God covenants with us in it by having respect to our works. The pious, among the Jewish people, both during and after the promulgation of the law, were illuminated by the same Spirit of faith, and the hope of a heavenly inheritance was sealed upon their hearts, of which the Spirit was the earnest and seal. The only difference is, that the Spirit was poured out in the kingdom of Christ in a more bountiful manner, and with a larger and more liberal hand. If you regard the dispensation of the doctrine of truth, salvation will then first seem to have been certainly manifested, when Christ was exhibited in the flesh; so great was the obscurity in which all things were involved in the Old Testament, when compared with the perspicuity of the New. Finally, the law, if considered in itself, can bind men, devoted to nothing but a wretched slavery, by the fear of death, because it promises no good but upon condition, and threatens death against all transgressors. Wherefore, as under the law it was a spirit of bondage, which oppressed the conscience with fear; so under the gospel it is the Spirit of adoption, which gladdens our hearts with the testimony of our salvation. Observe, also, that fear is joined with slavery, because the law must necessarily harass and torment the mind with miserable restlessness, while it exercises its dominion. On this account, there is no other remedy for appeasing the mind than when God forgives our sins, and, as a father, is indulgent to his children. *By whom we*

*cry*—He therefore changed the person that he might express the common lot of all the saints, as if he had said, You have received the Spirit by which you, and the rest of all us believers cry, Abba, Father. The imitation of the word used by children to parents is very emphatic, because he pronounces the name of Father in the persons of the faithful. Doubling the appellation by different words makes the language more emphatic. For Paul intimates that the mercy of God was now so published through the whole world, that his name was indiscriminately invoked in all languages, as Augustine observes; Paul therefore wished to express the harmony among all nations. Hence it follows that the Greek at present differs nothing from the Jew, since they are united one with the other. The Prophet Isaiah (xix. 18) speaks in a different manner, when he says, the language of Canaan shall be common to all people; for he has not respect to an external idiom, but to the harmony of the heart in worshipping God, and the same simple zeal in professing his true and pure worship. Crying is used to express confidence; as if he had said, We do not pray in a doubtful manner, but lift up without fear our loud voice to heaven. The faithful also called upon God the Father in the law, but not with such freedom of confidence, since the veil removed them far from the sanctuary; but now, when an entrance has been opened to us by the blood of Christ, we may boast in a familiar manner, and with freedom of expression, that we are the sons of God; hence this crying arises. Finally, the prophecy of Hosea is thus fulfilled, (Hos. ii. 23:) "I will say unto them, You are my people; and they will in turn answer, Thou art our God." For our freedom in prayer is greater, as the promise is more full and open.

*For the Spirit himself*—He does not simply state that the Spirit of God is a witness to our spirit, but

he uses a compound verb signifying to bear witness together with another. Paul means, the Spirit of God affords us such a testimony that our spirit can determine the adoption of God to be firm and unshaken, when he is our leader and master. For our mind would not, of its own accord, dictate this faith to us, unless the testimony of the Spirit preceded it. This is also an explanation of the following sentence, for while the Spirit testifies to us that we are the children of God, he, at the same time, infuses this confidence into our minds that we dare invoke God the Father. And certainly, since the confidence of the heart alone can open our mouth, unless the Spirit bears testimony to our hearts concerning the fatherly love of God, our tongues will continue mute in conceiving and uttering praises. For this must always be maintained as a principle, that we can no otherwise properly pray to God but by invoking the Father with our mouth, and we must be certainly persuaded and assured in our minds that he stands related to us in his fatherly character. The other position, that our faith can be proved only by invoking God, corresponds with this principle. Paul, therefore, not without reason, recalls us to this examination, and shows that the serious faith of every believer will then be made manifest, when he and all who receive the promises of grace devote themselves to prayer. And the trifling subtleties of the sophists receive a powerful refutation from this passage concerning moral conjecture, which is nothing else but uncertainty and anxiety of mind, nay, rather wavering and hallucination. Paul, at the same time, answers their objection. They ask how a man can fully know the will of God. This, however, is not the certainty of the human capacity, but the testimony of the Spirit of God, as the apostle treats more fully in his first epistle to the Corinthians,

where we must seek for a more complete exposition of this passage. The opinion, therefore, is undoubtedly proved, that none can be termed a son of God, who does not acknowledge himself to be such : this is termed knowledge by John, (1 John v. 19, 20,) for the purpose of showing its certainty.

*But if sons*—He proves, by an argument derived from such circumstances as are connected with or follow from his former observations, that salvation consists in having God for our Father. An inheritance is destined for sons ; when, therefore, God has adopted us for his children, he has also destined an inheritance for us. He then hints what such an inheritance this is, namely, a heavenly ; and, on this account, incorruptible and eternal, and such as has been manifested in Christ. All uncertainty is removed by this manifestation ; the excellence of the inheritance, which we partake with the only-begotten Son of God, is also increased. The design of Paul, as the following context will prove, is to extol the splendour of the promised inheritance ; that, being content with its blessings, we may despise with bravery the allurements of the world, and bear with patience all the troubles which may befall us in our passage through life. *If we suffer with him*—Various are the interpretations of this passage, but I give the preference to the following : “ We are fellow-heirs with Christ, provided we follow him in the same path, which he pursued, for the purpose of seeing our inheritance.” And because he made mention of Christ, he, therefore, wished to pass on to this exhortation, by this climax, as if the inheritance of God is ours, on account of our being adopted by his grace among his sons ; and, to remove all doubt, the possession of heaven is now conferred on Christ, with whom we are partakers. Our Redeemer went to that inheritance by the cross, and we must, there-

fore, go by the same means. Nor is there any cause for dreading what some fear, lest Paul ascribe our labours as the cause of eternal glory, for this manner of speaking is usual in Scripture ; but he points out the order which is followed by the Lord in bestowing upon us salvation, rather than its cause. He has, in the former part of this epistle, sufficiently advocated the gratuitous mercy of God against the merit of works ; now, while he exhorts us to patience, he does not dispute concerning the cause, whence salvation may come to us, but the manner by which God governs his own people.

*For I certainly reckon*—Although I do not disapprove of the interpretation, as foolish, given by those who consider this sentence introduced as a corrective, yet I prefer considering it as an enlarging of the exhortation, by way of anticipating an objection. “We need not be troubled, (such is the sense of the passage,) if we have to pass to the glory of heaven through manifold afflictions ; since these, when compared with the greatness of the glory of another world, are of the very slightest moment.” Future glory means eternal ; and the afflictions of the world, such as suddenly pass away. This passage, therefore, was evidently not well understood by the schoolmen, who derived from it their frivolous distinction of congruity and condignity. For the apostle is not comparing the dignity of each, but he lightens the weight of the cross by comparing it with the greatness of glory, for the very purpose of strengthening the minds of the faithful by patience.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.  
20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected

*the same* in hope. 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

*For the earnest expectation of the creature*—Paul teaches us that an example of patience, which he exhorts us to attain, is to be met with in brute creatures themselves; for, omitting all the various expositions, I thus understand the language of Paul: “There is no element, no part of the world, which, touched as it were with a knowledge of the present misery, is not steadily fixed upon the hope of the resurrection.” He proposes, indeed, two subjects—all creatures labour, and yet are supported by hope—hence appears the immense reward of eternal glory, which can excite and carry away all things to the desire of such a blessing. *Expectation of the creature waiteth*, though an uncommon expression, yet admits of a very appropriate sense; for Paul intended to show that the creatures, bound under the influence of great anxiety, and suspended by a strong desire, expected the arrival of that day which will openly present to our view the glory of the sons of God. He calls it the revelation of the sons of God, when we shall be like God, as John says; for though we know we are the sons of God, yet it doth not appear what we shall be. (1 John iii. 2.) I have retained Paul’s words, because Erasmus’s version, “until the sons of God shall be made manifest,” appeared to me bolder than the passage sanctions, without sufficiently expressing the mind of the apostle. For he does not mean that the sons of God would be made manifest in the last day, but it would then be apparent how desirable and happy their condition is, when, freed

from their corruption, they are clothed in heavenly glory. For he therefore attributes hope to creatures without sense, that believers may open their eyes to the sight of an invisible life, although concealed in the present world under a state of much deformity.

*For the creation is subject to vanity*—Paul declares the design of the expectation from the contrary; for, since creatures are now subject to corruption, they cannot be renewed until the sons of God are restored to a sound state; and on this account, while they desire their own renewal, look for the manifestation of the heavenly kingdom. He says they are subject to vanity, because they do not abide in a sure, solid, and firm condition, but pass away with a swift course, inconstant and evanescent; for he, undoubtedly, opposes vanity to an entire and perfect nature.

*Not willingly*—Since such creatures have no judgment, *will* must certainly be taken in this passage for *natural inclination*, according to which the whole nature of things is engaged in its own preservation and perfection; whatever, therefore, is kept under corruption suffers violence, if against the will and with the opposition and resistance of nature. Paul personifies the individual parts of the world, and introduces them as endued with sense, that we may feel more ashamed of our stupidity, if we are not elevated to higher hopes by the frail fluctuation of the world, which is presented to our view. *But by reason of him*—He proposes an example of obedience in all creatures, which, as he adds, arises from hope: hence the readiness of the sun, moon, and all the stars, for their uninterrupted course; hence the unwearied obedience of the earth in yielding its fruits; hence the unceasing agitation and motion of the air; hence the promptitude and vigour with which the waters flow; because God hath appointed

each their particular parts : nor has he only ordered what he wished them to do, by a precise and definite command, but has, at the same time, internally impressed upon them the hope of renewal. For the whole machine of the world would almost every moment flow away, and be dispersed in that melancholy, scattered, and dissipated state which followed the fall of Adam, and its individual parts would faint, unless they were propped and supported by some hidden firmness, derived from some other quarter. It would be very dishonourable that the earnest of the Spirit should produce less effect in the sons of God than secret hidden instinct effects in dead creatures. Creatures, therefore, although by nature they may be inclined to some other object, yet, because it has been God's pleasure to make them subject to vanity, obey his command ; and, because he has given them a hope of a better condition, they support themselves in their vain state, delaying their desire until the freedom from corruption, which has been promised, shall be revealed. Paul attributes to them *hope*, by personification, as he before endued them with desire and aversion.

*Because the creation itself also*—He shows how the creature is subject to vanity in hope, because the time will indeed arrive when it shall be freed from it, as Isaiah testifies, and Peter also confirms with greater clearness. We may hence infer how horrible a curse we have merited, since all innocent creatures from earth to heaven are punished in consequence of our vices ; and our offence is the cause of their labouring under corruption ; and the condemnation of the human race is thus impressed upon heaven, earth, and all other creatures. Again, it hence appears to how great an excellence of glory the sons of God are to be advanced, when all creatures will be called upon to magnify and illustrate its splen-

dour. Moreover, Paul does not understand that the creatures will be partakers of the same glory with the sons of God, but will participate, in their own manner, a better state, because the Creator of all will restore the present fallen world to a perfect and entire condition at the same time with the human race. It is neither expedient nor lawful to inquire with greater curiosity into the perfection and entireness, which will take place both in cattle, plants, and metals, because the chief part of their excellence will consist in incorruption. Shrewd, speculative, but not sober-minded men inquire whether the whole kind and race of animals will be immortal; if these speculations are indulged, into what labyrinths shall we not finally be hurried? Let us rest content with this simple doctrine—that their temperament will be such, and their order so compact and connected, that nothing will present deformity or inconstancy to our view.

*For we know that*—He again repeats the same sentiment, that he may pass on to man, though what is now stated has the force and form of a conclusion. For because creatures are subject to corruption, and that not from natural appetites, but God's appointment, and they have a hope of putting off, at some future time, their corrupt state, it follows that they groan, like a woman with child, until they be delivered. This is a very proper comparison, that we may know the groaning he speaks of is not vain, useless, nor deadly, since it will at last bring forth a joyful and happy fruit. Creatures, in fine, are neither content with their present condition, nor do they so suffer as to pine away without remedy; but bring forth, because they wait for a renewal at some future period. Their groaning together does not mean that they are, at the same time, united with each other by mutual anxiety, but he joins them as

companions with believers. The particle *hitherto*, or *until this day*, is calculated to alleviate the weariness of their long-continued languor. For if the creatures have continued in their groanings for so many ages, how inexcusable will our effeminacy or indolence be, if we faint in the short course of so shadowy a life.

23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

*Not only*—Some consider the apostle wished to exaggerate the dignity of our future happiness, because all things desire it with an ardent affection, both irrational animals, and we who are regenerated by the Spirit of God. This opinion admits of defence, but he appears, I think, to institute a comparison between the greater and less in the following manner: “The elements, devoid of sense and reason, so great is the excellence of our future glory, glow with a certain desire for its arrival; much more then ought we, who are illuminated by the Spirit of God, to aspire and labour to the utmost for the purpose of attaining so great a quantity of good, both by the firmness of our faith, and the earnest endeavours of our zeal.” A two-fold feeling is required in believers,—to groan, being loaded with a sense of their present misery, and still to expect with patience their deliverance. He wishes believers to be so much elevated by the expectation of future blessedness, as to

overcome, by their magnanimity, all present troubles, not considering their character and situation in this world, but their future glory and excellence. *We which have the first-fruits*—I am by no means pleased with the interpretation of those who explain *first-fruits* to mean, a rare and distinguished excellence, and, to avoid all ambiguity, I have preferred *beginnings*, as the best translation. For I do not consider it spoken of the apostles alone, as these commentators, but of all the faithful, who, being sprinkled in this world with only a few drops of the Spirit, or after having made great progress, being endowed with a certain measure of his grace, certainly continue to be still at a great distance from perfection. These are the *beginnings*, or *first-fruits* of the apostle, to which the entire and complete returns are opposed. For we need not wonder at our being moved with trouble, and disquieted because we have not yet had the Spirit bestowed upon us in his fulness. Paul repeats *ourselves*, and adds, *in ourselves*, for effect, that he may express our desire in a more ardent manner. He mentions, also, groans as well as desires, because where a sense of misery is felt, groaning necessarily follows. *Waiting for the adoption*—*Adoption* is here termed improperly, but not without the very best reason, the enjoyment of the inheritance into which we have been adopted. For Paul means, the eternal decree of God (by which he hath chosen us to himself for sons before the foundation of the world, concerning which also he affords us witnesses by the gospel, and seals the faith of it on our hearts by the Spirit) would be useless and vain, unless the promised resurrection, which is its effect, was certain and undoubted. For why is God our Father, but that a heavenly inheritance might receive us, after finishing our earthly pilgrimage? *The redemption of the body*, which is afterwards subjoined,

impresses upon us the same truth. For the price of our redemption was so paid by Christ, that death keeps us still bound by its chains ; nay, we carry it within us, and it hence follows that the sacrifice of the death of Christ would be unfruitful and vain, unless its fruits should appear in our renewal in heaven.

*For we are saved by hope*—Paul confirms his exhortation by another argument, because indeed our salvation cannot be separated from a species of death, and he proves this from the nature of hope. For as hope extends itself to subjects not yet fully discovered, and represents an image to our minds of things hidden and far remote, no expectation can be entertained concerning any object which is either openly seen, or held in possession by the hand. Paul takes it for granted, which cannot be denied, that our salvation, as long as we continue in this world, is founded in hope, and, as a consequence, it is lodged with God far above our senses. The expression, *hope that is seen*, may appear harsh, but it does not obscure the sense. For he simply wishes to teach us that hope is never joined with open possession, since it relates to a future, not a present good. If groaning, therefore, is grievous to any, the order laid down by God is necessarily subverted, who never calls his children to a triumph, until he has exercised them in the warfare of suffering. Since God has thought fit to cherish, as it were, our salvation in his secret bosom, it is expedient for us to labour in this world, to be oppressed, to lament, be afflicted, nay, to lie as half dead, or to resemble the dead. For such as desire a visible salvation withdraw themselves from it when they renounce hope, which is ordained its guardian by divine appointment.

*But if we hope for that we see not*—The argument is taken from the antecedent to the consequent,

because patience necessarily follows hope. For if it is troublesome to want a desired good, you must necessarily fall into despair, unless you support and comfort yourself by patience ; hope, therefore, always draws patience along with it as a companion. The conclusion is very appropriate, that all the promises of the gospel concerning the glory of the resurrection vanish unless we spend our present life in bearing with patience our crosses and tribulations ; for, if our life is invisible, we must necessarily keep death before our eyes ; and if glory is invisible, therefore ignominy and disgrace is our present state. Paul's arguments, if you wish to include the whole passage in a few words, may be placed in the following form : "The salvation of all the pious is laid up in hope ; to be attentively fixed on future and absent goods is the peculiar property of hope ; the salvation, therefore, of believers is hidden and concealed. Hope can be supported only by patience, therefore the salvation of believers is fulfilled only by the same virtue." We have here also a striking passage to show that patience is the inseparable companion of faith ; and the reason is plain, because, while we comfort ourselves with the hope of a better condition, the sense of our present miseries is softened and mitigated, and they are borne with less difficulty.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

*Likewise the Spirit also*—To prevent believers from objecting their own imbecility, as being inadequate to support so many and such heavy burdens, Paul offers them the assistance of the Spirit as abundantly sufficient to overcome all their difficulties. Let none complain of bearing the cross as above their powers, since we are supplied with heavenly assistance and strength. The Greek word is very expressive, because, indeed, the Spirit takes itself part of the burden, which oppresses our weakness, and not only affords us aid and succour, but so lightens us, as to join at the same time in undergoing with us the heavy load. The expression, *infirmities*, in the plural number, increases the force of the passage; for since experience shows us to be threatened with numberless ruins, unless God upholds with his hand, Paul admonishes us that the Spirit of God will afford sufficient protection, although our weakness should pervade every part, and our various infirmities threaten us with a fall; and his assistance will prevent us from ever being destroyed by any violence, or buried under any heap of evils. But these supplies of the Spirit teach us with greater certainty, that God has ordained us to struggle earnestly for our redemption by sighs and groans. *For we know not what we should pray for*—He had already spoken of the testimony of the Spirit, by which we become acquainted with God the Father, and we dare, relying on this, invoke him as a father; he now again repeats the second part of our calling on the Lord, and says, the same Spirit teaches us in what manner we ought to lift up our cry to God, and what petitions we ought to ask of him in prayer. Paul hath seasonably joined prayers with the anxious desires of the pious, because God does not therefore afflict them with troubles that they may inwardly indulge

and foster their hidden grief, but free themselves from their burdens by prayer, and thus exercise their faith. Various expositions are, I know, given of this passage, but, in my opinion, Paul simply wishes to impress upon his readers that we are blind in offering our petitions to God, for, although we feel our evils, yet the entanglement, perplexity, and confusion of our mind are too great to allow us to make a proper choice of what suits our wants, or is expedient for our necessities. A rule, it may be objected, is prescribed us in the word of God, and, in reply, I answer, our affections remain, notwithstanding such assistance, sunk in darkness, until they are directed by the light of the Spirit of truth and love. *But the Spirit himself maketh intercession*—Although it may not yet in reality, or from the event, appear that God has heard our prayers, yet Paul concludes that the presence of heavenly grace shines forth in the very earnest desire to pray, because none could, of his own accord, conceive holy and pious supplications. Unbelievers, indeed, foolishly utter their prayers, but with a mere mocking of God, because they are neither distinguished by sincerity, nor seriousness, nor are they formed in a proper manner. The Spirit, therefore, must necessarily dictate the method of presenting a good prayer. Groans which burst forth by the impulse of the Spirit are termed unutterable, because they far exceed the comprehension of our understanding. The Spirit of God is said to intercede, not because he suppliantly humbles himself to pray or groan, but excites in our minds those requests, with which it is proper for us to importune our God, and he afterwards so affects our hearts that they enter heaven itself by their ardour. Paul used this language that he might more forcibly and significantly attribute the whole to the grace of the Spirit. We are ordered indeed to knock, but none

can of his own accord premeditate one syllable unless God knocks at our hearts by the secret impulse of his Holy Spirit, and thus opens our soul to admit his entrance.

*And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth the mind of the Spirit*—A remarkable reason for confirming our confidence, because God hears us while our prayers proceed from his Spirit. For he is intimately acquainted with our prayers, as being the thoughts of his Spirit. There is great propriety in using the word *knoweth*, for it means that God does not observe these affections of the Spirit as new and uncommon, or reject them as absurd ; but acknowledges, and, at the same time, kindly receives them, since they are recognised and approved by the God of grace. As Paul, therefore, lately testified that God would afford assistance while he conducts us, as it were, to his bosom, so he now adds another comfort, that we should not be disappointed in our prayers, which are under his regulation. The reason is added immediately after, because he thus makes us conformable to his pleasure ; and hence whatever is agreeable to his will, by which all things are governed, must necessarily be granted. We may learn, also, that our agreement with the will of God must form the chief part in prayer ; for he cannot be placed under any possible obligation by our own desires. We must supplicate God, therefore, to regulate our prayers agreeably to his pleasure, if we are desirous to have them accepted by the Lord of all power.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* con-

formed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. 30 Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

*And we know*—The troubles of the present life (such is Paul's conclusion from his former statements) rather assist our salvation, than retard its progress. His using the illative particle does not affect this sense, for he frequently in this manner confounds the use of adverbs ; he also, at the same time, answers an objection by the inference which he deduces ; for the judgment and feeling of the flesh complain that God by no means appears to hear our prayers, since our afflictions continue always to proceed in the same course. The apostle, therefore, immediately answers, Though God may not immediately assist his people, he does not desert them ; for, by a wonderful contrivance, he converts their apparent losses and troubles to be useful in advancing their salvation. I do not object to those who prefer reading this sentence detached from the other, and make Paul adduce it as a new argument to show that we ought not to be grieved or troubled on account of adversity, by which our salvation is promoted and assisted. Paul's design is, in the meantime, plain,—although the elect and reprobate are both indifferently liable to the same evils, yet there is a great difference, for God instructs believers, and procures their salvation by afflictions. Paul, it must be remembered, is speaking only of adversity to the following effect :—all events befalling the righteous are so ordered and governed by the special appointment of God, that the final issue proves what was considered by the world to be injurious to believers, contributes to promote their advantage.

Paul is here speaking of the cross ; and, on this account, the observation of Augustine, though true, does not bear on this passage,—that even the sins of believers are so ordered by the providence of God as to serve rather to the advancement of their salvation than to their injury. The love of God, it must be observed, includes, according to Paul, the whole of piety, as, in reality, on this the whole desire of righteousness depends. *To them who are the called according to his purpose*—This sentence seems added as a corrective, to prevent the opinion that the faithful obtained so great an advantage from adversity by their own merit, because they love God ; for we know, where salvation is considered, men willingly begin of their own accord to contrive some preparations by which they may prevent the grace of God. Paul, therefore, informs us that those, whom he called the worshippers of God, had first been elected by him. For the order is, undoubtedly, therefore pointed out that we may know, all things which contribute to advance the salvation of the saints depend on the gratuitous adoption of God as the first cause. Nay, Paul shows that God does not love believers before they are called by him, as in Gal. iv. 9, he informs us the Galatians were first acknowledged by God before he was known to them. It is true, afflictions, according to Paul's position, avail to the salvation only of those who love God ; but the statement of John is equally true, that we then begin to love God when he has prevented us by his gratuitous love. Moreover, the *calling* here mentioned by Paul is extensive ; for it ought not to be confined to the manifestation of election, which will be mentioned afterwards, but is simply opposed to the course pursued by man ; as if Paul had said, Believers do not acquire piety by their own exertion, but are rather led by the hand of God, since he has chosen them for

his peculiar people. The divine purpose distinctly excludes every invention of men for affording mutual aid to the Lord, and Paul asserts that the causes of our election are to be sought for nowhere else than in the secret good pleasure of God. This is better shown from Eph. i. and 2 Tim. i., where the antithesis between the purpose of God and human righteousness is distinctly expressed. Paul undoubtedly, therefore, mentioned in a particular manner our salvation to be founded on the election of God, that he might pass from this to his chief object, which he immediately joined with it, namely, that afflictions were determined for us by a heavenly decree, to conform us to the image of Christ, and thus connect, as it were, our salvation by a certain necessary bond with the bearing of the cross.

*For whom he did foreknow*—He demonstrates, therefore, from the very order of election, that all the afflictions of the faithful are only the manner by which they are made conformable to the image of Christ, because he had already testified its necessity. Affliction, therefore, need not excite in us grief, bitterness of sorrow, or trouble, unless we lament on account of the election of God, by which we are foreordained to life, and are distressed to represent in our own persons the image of the Son of God, by which we are prepared for the glory of heaven. But the foreknowledge of God, here mentioned by Paul, is not mere prescience, as some ignorant, unskilled men foolishly imagine; but adoption, by which he has always separated his children from the reprobates. In this sense, Peter says, that believers had been elected to the sanctification of the Spirit, according to the foreknowledge of God. It is a foolish inference of those disputants, who say, that God has elected such only as he foresaw would be worthy of grace. For Peter does not flatter believers, as if they

were elected for their own individual merits, but refers their election to the eternal counsel of God, and entirely abandons all idea of dignity. In this passage, also, Paul repeats in another word what he had lately hinted concerning God's eternal purpose; and it hence follows that this knowledge depends on the good pleasure of his will, because by adopting whom he would, God foreknew nothing out of himself, but only marked out those whom he intended to elect. The word *predestinated* is referred to the circumstance of this particular passage; for Paul only understands God had so determined that all the adopted should bear the image of Christ; nor has he simply said, to be conformed to Christ, but to his *image*, that he might teach the existence of a living and shining example in Christ, which is proposed as a pattern and model to all God's children. The sum of the whole is, "Our gratuitous adoption, in which our salvation consists, is inseparable from the other decree, namely, his appointing us to bear the cross; for none can be an heir of heaven, who has not first been conformable to the only begotten Son of God." I prefer the translation, that he *may* be the first-born, rather than *might*, for the original admits of both these constructions. Moreover, Paul wished only to observe this in Christ's primogeniture; if Christ possesses a prerogative among all the children of God, he was justly given us for a pattern, that we might not refuse any thing which he has deigned to undergo. As, therefore, our heavenly Father testifies by every method the power and dignity bestowed upon his Son, he wishes all whom he adopts to the inheritance of his kingdom to be conformed to his example. For, though the condition of the pious differs in kind, as there is a variety in the members of the human body, yet each individual has a connexion with his head. As, therefore, the first-begotten supports the

name of the family, so Christ is placed in an elevated degree, both that he might surpass believers in honour, and by the common mark of brotherhood include all under himself.

*But whom he predestinated, them he also called—* He now has recourse to a climax by which he confirms, with a more clear demonstration, that our conformity to Christ contributes to our salvation; by which we are taught the impossibility of separating the cross from our vocation, justification, and final glory. My former remark must be again repeated, to enable my readers to understand the mind of the apostle more clearly,—that predestination does not mean election, but God's purpose or decree by which he appointed his people to bear the cross. When believers are, as Paul informs us, called, he means, God no longer keeps concealed with himself what he has determined concerning them, but has disclosed it, that they may bear with equanimity and patience the law enjoined them. For vocation is here distinguished from secret election, as inferior to it. Let none object that each believer is unacquainted with the condition and state appointed him: the apostle says, God manifestly displays his secret counsel by his vocation; and this testimony does not consist in external preaching alone, but has the power of the Spirit united with it; because he is treating of the elect, whom God not only invites by his voice, but draws by his internal operation. Justification might be extended, not improperly, according to the continued tenor of divine grace, from the calling of the believer to his death; but, because this word through the whole of the epistle is used by Paul for the gratuitous imputation of righteousness, it is unnecessary for us to depart from its usual sense. Paul's design is to prevent us from avoiding afflictions by offering us a more precious compensation. And what can be

more desirable than to be reconciled to God, that our miseries may be no longer signs of his curse, nor tend to our ruin? He therefore afterwards adds, that those who are now weighed down with the cross will enjoy eternal glory, so that they will sustain no loss from their troubles and disgrace. Although the enjoyment of glory is yet displayed in none but our Head, yet, because we now perceive in him the inheritance of eternal life, his glory produces such confident security of our own, that our hope may justly be compared to a present possession. Paul, according to a Hebraism, uses the past tense instead of the present. Paul undoubtedly marks a continued act in this sense: "God at the same time calls and justifies in hope of salvation those who are now exercised by the cross according to his counsel, that their humiliation may not deprive them of any part of their glory. For, though their present troubles tarnish its lustre before the world, yet it shines with undiminished splendour before God and his angels." Paul intends to show by this climax that the afflictions of believers, which cause their present humiliation, are intended to confer upon them the glory of the kingdom of heaven, and to bring them to the glory of Christ's resurrection, with whom they are now crucified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth; 34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

*What shall we then say*—Having now fully established his point, he breaks forth into exclamations by which he expresses the magnanimity that believers ought to possess while adversity urges them to despair. He teaches us by these words that an invincible fortitude, calculated to subdue all trials and temptations, is to be found in the fatherly kindness and favour of God. For we know no other opinion is usually formed concerning the love or hatred of God, than from the consideration of our present state. Grief, therefore, seizes the mind, removes and destroys all confidence and comfort, when the events which befall us are not propitious. But Paul immediately calls them back to a more deep investigation of the principle of divine love ; and proves the foolish and ill-timed reasoning of those, who stand still beholding with dismay the melancholy spectacle and appearance of the Christian warfare. I grant, indeed, the scourges of the Lord of hosts are, of themselves, deservedly considered signs of his indignation ; but since these marks of his wrath are blessed in Christ, Paul orders the saints to take hold, before every thing else, of the fatherly love of God ; that, trusting and relying upon this shield, they may leap for joy, feeling the greatest security in all their misfortunes. God's protection is a brazen wall to us ; and we may rest safe, without fear or care, in the midst of all dangers when our heavenly Father shows us his kindness. Paul does not mean that we shall experience no adversity, but promises victory against every assault, and every description of enemies. *If God be for us*—This is the chief, and, therefore, the only prop that can support us in every temptation. For, if God is not propitious, although every thing besides should smile upon us, yet we can form no conception of certainty, and of confidence. On the other hand, his alone favour is a sufficiently

great consolation for all our sorrow, a sufficiently powerful protection against all the storms and tempests of evils and misfortunes. The numerous testimonies of Scripture afford light and evidence to this truth, where the saints of God, relying on the power of Omnipotence alone, dare despise every adversity they meet with in the world. "If I walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil." (Ps. xxiii. 4.) "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to the mountain?" (Psalm xi. 1.) "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about." (Psalm iii. 6.) For there is no power, either under or above heaven, which can resist the arm of the Most High. We need not, therefore, tremble at any mischief that might befall us while he is our defence. True confidence, therefore, in God, is at last manifested by the believer, who, content with his protection, dreads nothing so much as despondency. The saints are, indeed, often shaken, but never entirely cast down. The apostle's advice may be summed up in the following sentence: "The pious soul ought to stand firm and unshaken, relying on the internal testimony of the Spirit, and cast off all dependence on external things."

*He who spared not his own Son*—Since it is of great importance to us to be so fully persuaded of the love of God, as to stand undismayed, and free from trembling in this our glorying; Paul therefore produces the price of our reconciliation, that he may confirm our confidence in God's favour. And it is, indeed, a remarkable, clear, and shining evidence of his inestimable love, that the Father entertained no doubt to expend\* his Son for our salva-

\* Expended Deity for human weal.—*Young.*

tion. Hence Paul argues from the greater to the less, that God will neglect nothing which he foresees may be useful to us, since he has nothing either more renowned, more precious, or more excellent than his only Son. We ought to be exhorted, invigorated, and roused by this passage, to consider what Christ brings us with himself, for the purpose of contemplating his invaluable riches ; for, as he is a pledge of God's immense love towards us, so he has not been sent to us naked, or empty-handed, but filled with all heavenly treasures, that nothing may be wanting for the complete happiness of those by whom he is possessed. *To deliver up* means *to expose to death*.

*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* The first and chief consolation of the pious in adversity is the sure persuasion of God's fatherly kindness : hence our certainty of salvation, our calm security of mind, by which adversity is sweetened, or the bitterness of grief at least mitigated. A more fit exhortation, therefore, to patience cannot be supplied us than a clear understanding of our enjoying God's favour. Paul, therefore, makes this confidence the commencement of consolation, by which the faithful ought to be strengthened against all evils. For since man's salvation is first attacked by accusation, and next subverted by condemnation, he, in the first place, removes all danger of accusation, for there is one Judge alone, before whose tribunal we must stand. No charge, therefore, can be brought against us, when we are justified by infinite holiness. The antithetic parts of the sentence do not appear to be exactly opposed to each other, for the two members ought rather to be placed in the following order : Who shall lay any thing to our charge ? It is Christ who intercedes. Who shall condemn us ? It is God who justifies. God's absolution is opposed to condemnation ; Christ's defence, to accusation.

Paul had a reason for transposing the sentence, since he was desirous, by arguing, as it is said, from the highest to the lowest, to fortify the children of God with confidence, calculated to ward off, to a very great distance, all anxiety, perplexity, and fear. He concludes, therefore, more emphatically, that the children of God are not liable to accusation, because the infinite Sovereign justifies, than if he had said Christ was their advocate; because he more forcibly shows that the process for trial is stopped at the remote source of justice, when the Judge pronounces the defendant to be entirely exempted from guilt, whom the plaintiff was desirous to drag to punishment. The same reasoning also applies to the second antithesis, for he shows believers to be in no danger of condemnation, since Christ, by expiating their sins, has prevented God's judgment; and, by his own intercession, not only destroys death, but covers their sins by an entire oblivion, so that no account is taken of their guilt. "We are," to sum up the whole, "not only freed from terror by present remedies, when we come to God's tribunal, but the Lord meets us at a distance, that he may more completely secure our confidence." Justification, it must be here observed, as we have stated above, means nothing else, in the language of Paul, but the treating as just those who have been absolved from the divine sentence of condemnation. This is here proved, without difficulty, by arguing from the position of one contrary proposition, to the subversion of the other; for to absolve, and to receive among criminals, are direct contraries; therefore unerring truth will admit no accusation against us, since we are absolved by Jehovah from all blame. For the devil is undoubtedly the accuser of all the pious; the law of God itself, and their own conscience also, reprove them; but all these combined avail nothing with

God the Judge, by whom they are justified and acquitted. No adversary, therefore, can shake, much less destroy, our salvation. He likewise so calls them elect, as to entertain no doubt of his being in their number. Nor is this, as some sophists falsely state, from special revelation, but from the common judgment of all the pious. Every believer, therefore, from the example of Paul, may apply to his own case what is here mentioned concerning the elect, otherwise it would not only be a cold doctrine, but entirely dead, if election was buried in the secret council of God. But since we know the apostle designedly introduces here what every believer ought to adapt to his own purpose, we are all undoubtedly required to examine our own calling, that we may determine whether we be the children of God.

*Who is he that condemneth?*—As none can avail any thing by accusation where the judge absolves, so there is no condemnation where the demand of the law is satisfied, and the punishment already paid. Christ once discharged the punishment due to our transgressions, and thus acknowledged that he underwent the penalty in our stead, for the purpose of delivering us; whoever, therefore, is desirous to condemn us after this deliverance, must recall Christ himself to undergo the pains of death. But he is not only dead, but has risen victorious by his resurrection from death, and triumphed over the power of our last enemy. Christ, the apostle adds, is now seated at the right hand of the Father; by which is signified that he obtains the dominion of heaven and earth, and the full rule and authority of all things, as mentioned Eph. i. 20. Christ, finally, is so seated, according to Paul, as to be a constant advocate and intercessor in defence of our salvation; and it hence follows, every accuser, desirous to condemn us, not only makes Christ's death to be vain, but wages war

with his incomparable power, which was bestowed upon him as an ornament by the Father, who committed to the Messiah, with such distinguished might, the most absolute dominion. This security, so great as to dare triumphantly to vaunt over the devil, death, and sin, and the very gates of hell, ought to be seated in all pious breasts; for we have no faith unless we are certainly assured that Christ is ours, and the Father reconciled to us in our loving Redeemer. No imagination, therefore, can be conceived more ruinous, pernicious, or destructive, than the opinion of the schoolmen concerning the uncertainty of faith. *Who intercedes*—It was necessary to make this express addition, lest the divine majesty of the Saviour should make us tremble. Paul clothes Christ, who from his lofty throne holds all things under his feet and subject to his authority, with his mediatorial character; on which account it is absurd to tremble at his presence, since he not only kindly and courteously invites us to himself, but appears as intercessor on our account in the presence of his Father. We must not, therefore, measure this intercession by our carnal sense and judgment; we must not consider Jesus to be interceding with the Father in a suppliant posture on his bended knees, and with stretched out hands. Christ is justly said to intercede, since he constantly appears with his death and resurrection, which act instead of an eternal intercession, and possess the power and efficacy of the most lively pleading, and thus reconcile the Father to us, and make the God of love ready to listen to our entreaties.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 (As

it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)  
37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.

*Who shall separate*—Paul extends this security more largely to objects of an inferior character, nature, and description. For every believer, who has the sure confidence of enjoying the divine favour, can remain unmoved in the midst of the most grievous afflictions, which usually torment mankind to such an extent, because they either do not consider these to happen by the providence of God, or interpret them as signs and marks of the divine wrath, or judge themselves to be deserted and forsaken of the Maker of all things, or expect no termination and issue to their distresses, or do not meditate on a better life, or perplex themselves by reasons of a similar nature. The mind, when freed from errors of this description, will easily rest and be quiet. We must, therefore, according to the apostle, whatever event may occur, stand firm in this belief, that God never ceases to care for us, whom he hath once embraced with his love. For he does not simply say, There is nothing which can separate God from his love of us; but Paul is desirous that the knowledge and lively sense of the love manifested by our Father, should flourish with so much vigour in our hearts, as always to shine forth and display itself in the midst of the greatest darkness in which we are involved by our afflictions. For as clouds, though they obscure the clear sight of the sun, yet do not entirely deprive us of his brightness; so God sends forth the rays of his grace, through the deepest gloom of our adversity, to prevent the most violent temptation from overwhelming us with despair.

Nay, our faith, supported as it were on wings by the promises of God, should ascend upwards, and penetrate heaven itself through all intervening obstacles. Adversity, considered simply by itself, is undoubtedly a sign of God's wrath ; but when preceded by pardon and reconciliation, we must lay it down as a fixed principle, that God, even when his chastening hand is upon us, never forgets his mercy. Nay, while he puts us in mind of our deserts, he testifies the great regard he has for our salvation, by earnestly entreating and soliciting us to repent. Paul calls it *the love of Christ*, because the Father has, in some measure, disclosed to us his own bowels of compassion in our Saviour. Since the love of God, therefore, must not be sought out of Christ, Paul is justly entitled to recall us to the tender compassion of our Redeemer, that our faith may behold the serene and shining countenance of our Father, in the rays of the grace of our glorious Mediator. To conclude, no adversity ought to undermine or subvert this faith ; for if God be kind and favourable in our afflictions, we shall continue unshaken by the severest shocks. Some take the love of Christ in a passive sense, when we love him, as if Paul intended to prepare us for enduring our afflictions with invincible fortitude. The whole context easily refutes this interpretation, and the more clear definition of love given afterwards by Paul, removes all doubt on this subject. *Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution*—The masculine pronoun, used by the apostle, implies a secret emphatic sense ; for he might have said, What shall separate us ? but he preferred the personification of mute beings, that he might make us engage in combat with as many champions as there are different kinds of temptations, to shake the confidence of our faith. These three words are distinguished from each other in the following

manner :—*tribulation* includes every kind of trouble and sorrow ; *distress* means a more inward passion and affection of the mind, when, from want of knowing what plan to pursue in our conduct, we are reduced to great difficulties. Abraham and Lot experienced this anxiety when the former was compelled to expose his wife to prostitution, and the latter his daughters, because they saw no issue to the perplexities in which they were unexpectedly involved. *Persecution* properly means the violence of tyrants, by which the children of God are undeservedly harassed and tormented by the wicked. And though Paul (2 Cor. iv. 8) says, the sons of God cannot be distressed or reduced to straits, yet he does not contradict himself, for he does not simply free them from anxious solicitude, but means that the faithful are rescued from the most entangling trials, as is manifested by the examples of Abraham and Lot.

*As it is written*—This quotation from Scripture is very applicable to the present subject, for it hints that we ought not to faint from fear of death, since it is almost appointed to the servants of God to have death, as it were, present before their eyes. The miserable oppression of the people of the Jews under the tyranny of Antiochus is, probably, described in this psalm ; for it is expressly stated that he acted with so much cruel tyranny against the worshippers of God from no other cause than his hatred of real and true piety. A distinguished testimony in their favour is added, namely, that they did not even then depart from the covenant of God, which Paul, I think, particularly notices. Nor do the complaints made by the pious in this psalm, concerning the unusual calamity with which they were then afflicted, afford any reason why believers should be dissatisfied under persecution. For, since they bear wit-

ness to their innocence in proving their grievous oppression by so many evils, a satisfactory argument is thus supplied to prove there was nothing new in the Lord suffering his saints to be undeservedly exposed to the cruel tyranny of the wicked. It is evident, also, this could not take place but for their good, since Scripture teaches us it is inconsistent with the justice of God to destroy the righteous with the wicked; (Gen. xviii. 23;) nay, it is rather a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble the righteous, and rest to those who are troubled. (2 Thess. i. 6, 7.) They afterwards affirm their sufferings to be inflicted on account of the Lord, and Christ pronounces those blessed, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. (Matt. v. 10.) The expression, *are killed all the day long*, means, "Death so threatens them, that such a life differs almost nothing from death."

*We are more than conquerors*—We always escape with struggling, and swim out of the waters of affliction and persecution in which we were plunged. I have retained a literal translation of the Greek, though it is not generally used in Latin. It sometimes indeed happens that believers seem to have been overcome by their afflictions, and to lie as if nearly worn out and destroyed, so great is the trial, or rather humiliation with which they are afflicted by the Lord. But an issue is always so granted them in this case that they come off conquerors. To make believers recognise the source of this invincible courage, he again repeats what he had formerly mentioned; for he not only teaches that God, because we are loved by him, places his hand underneath us for the purpose of affording support and protection in our most grievous distresses, but confirms the opinion which he has already stated concerning the love of Christ. This one word puts it beyond a

doubt that the apostle is not speaking of the fervour of love by which we are powerfully drawn to God, but concerning the fatherly favour of God or Christ himself towards us ; and a persuasion of this, firmly fixed in our hearts, will always pluck us out of the depths of hell, raise us to the light of life, and possess sufficient strength to afford us protection.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul, for the purpose of confirming us more strongly in the opinions which he has advanced, breaks forth in a strain of hyperbolical praise. Should all beings, says the apostle, in life or death, combine their whole united powers, which seem calculated to separate and tear us from God, they will accomplish nothing ; nay, the very angels themselves, should they endeavour to subvert the foundation of the love of God in Christ, will inflict upon us no injury. Nor is the objection valid, that angels are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. i. 4.) For the apostle reasons, both in this passage and in Gal. i. 8, from what cannot possibly happen. We may hence observe how vile all things ought to appear in our sight when compared with the glory of God, since we are allowed to abuse even angels themselves for the purpose of asserting his truth. Angels are meant by *principalities or powers*, who are thus denominated, because they are the chief instruments of divine power. These two words are added, as if

angels sounded too low to convey the full meaning of the apostle. You may adopt the following interpretation, if you prefer it: “neither angels, nor any other high and elevated dominions and powers.” For we use this manner of expressing our ideas, when we speak of objects to us unknown, and exceeding our comprehension.

*Nor things present, nor things to come*—Paul, notwithstanding his use of hyperbolical language, makes, in reality, the following assertion,—that no continued length of time can possibly separate us from the grace of the Lord. This addition was necessary, since we have not only to struggle with sorrow, which we experience and feel from present evils; but with fear, care, and trouble, which grieve us from the apprehension of impending dangers. We need not therefore fear—such is the sense of the apostle—lest the faith of our adoption should be destroyed by the longest possible continuance of evils. This passage is plainly opposed to the schoolmen, who vainly imagine that none can have any certainty of final perseverance, except by the grace and favour of a special revelation, which they consider to be a very rare gift. This destroys all the faith of the believer, which certainly has no existence, unless it is extended to death, and even after death. We, on the contrary, ought to have sure confidence, that the Almighty, who has begun a good work in us, will finish it until the day of our Lord Jesus.

*Which is in Christ*—Christ is the bond, for he is the well-beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased. (Matt. iii. 17.) If, therefore, we are joined to God by him, we may rest assured of God's inflexible and unwearied favour and good will to us. The apostle here speaks more distinctly than before, and determines the fountain of love to be in the Father, and asserts that it flows down to us from Christ.

## CHAPTER IX.

1 I SAY the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,  
2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises; 5 Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

In the present chapter, he begins to meet the offences and causes of stumbling which might divert men's minds from Christ; that he was not only rejected and despised, but, in a great measure, hated and abhorred by the Jews, for whom he was appointed and ordained by the covenant of the law. This reasoning seems to establish one of the two following conclusions,—either that the truth of the divine promise is not preserved, or Jesus, preached by Paul, is not the Lord's Christ, who had been promised in an especial manner to the Jews. The apostle gives a very excellent solution to both these difficulties in his subsequent observations. Although he treats the subject in such a manner as to refrain from every kind of harshness towards the Jews, that he might not exasperate their minds, yet he does not

yield to them one tittle which might be injurious to the cause of the gospel ; for he assigns them, in such a manner, their own peculiar honours, as to deprive Christ, in no degree, of any glory with which he is adorned. Notwithstanding his transition to the statement of this new subject appears so abrupt as to have no connexion with the context, yet he commences as if he had made allusion to it in a former part of the epistle. The reason of this arises from his attention being directed to the state of the Jews, after he had completed the discussion relative to the doctrine he was teaching, when he feels astonished on considering their unbelief, as if struck with some unusual prodigy, and suddenly breaks forth in calling God to witness the truth of what he said, as if he was treating on a subject already investigated in a former part of the epistle. It was impossible for any careful examiner of the doctrine, which Paul proved to be taught in the law and the prophets, not to be impressed with this reflection, Why do the Jews reject, with so much obstinacy, truths so clearly revealed in their own writings ? It was, also, a well-known fact, that the Jews so cordially hated all the observations made by Paul in his discourse concerning the law of Moses and the grace of Christ, as to afford no assistance to the faith of the gentiles by their agreement with his views. The removal, therefore, of this stumbling-block was necessary, lest the course and progress of the gospel should be suddenly stopped.

*I say the truth in Christ*—Since it was the presumptive opinion of a considerable number, that Paul was the sworn enemy of the Jewish nation, and many of his private friends and relations suspected his want of allegiance to Moses, and considered him as teaching his followers to revolt from the standard of their great lawgiver, he prepares the minds of his read-

ers, by an introductory preface, to entertain a favourable opinion of him before he enters into any dispute concerning the subject he proposed to consider. By this means he clears himself from all false suspicions which were formed against him, as entertaining dispositions hostile to the Jews. He swears also to the truth of his statement, because the subject was of so great importance as to require an oath ; and he was fully convinced that his mere affirmation alone would not secure the belief of his countrymen, who had already conceived so strong a prejudice against his person and doctrine as opposed to the Mosaic dispensation. This and similar examples, as I have stated in the first chapter, may teach us the lawfulness of such oaths as confirm any truth whose knowledge is productive of great benefit, and the belief of which could not otherwise be established. The sentence, *in Christ*, means, *according to Christ*. By adding, *I lie not*, he intends to remove all suspicion of his using artifice, falsehood, or disguise. By using the words, *my conscience also bearing me witness*, he summons his conscience before the judgment-seat of God, because he calls the Spirit as a witness to the sense he wished to impress upon his readers. For he introduced the name of the Spirit with a view to confirm, in a stronger manner, by the exalted character of the witness to which he appealed, that, in pleading the cause of Christ, he was free and clear from every depraved feeling of envy and contention, and conducted by the guidance and government of the Spirit of God. Men, blinded by fleshly inclination, although they may not deceive, frequently obscure the light of the truth with the approbation of their will, and the full light of knowledge. We then properly swear by the name of God, when we appeal to him as a witness for the confirmation of any doubtful subject, and, at the same time, make

ourselves amenable to the justice of his sentence, and severity of his punishment, if we are guilty of falsehood.

*That I have great heaviness*—Paul's abrupt transition, and his avoiding immediate discussion of the subject to be considered, were intentional ; for it was not yet convenient for him openly and clearly to state the destruction impending over the Jewish nation. He thus intimates also the greater vehemence of his grief, for very strong feelings are generally unable to express themselves in words. He will, hereafter, state the cause of his grief, when he has confirmed the Jews more fully in the belief of his sincerity. The very great and agonizing sorrow felt by Paul on account of the destruction of the Jews, which he knew would take place according to the will and dispensation of the Most High, teaches us that the obedience, which we yield to the providence of the Ruler of all things, does not prevent us from lamenting and bewailing the ruin of men of abandoned characters, to which we know them to be devoted by the just judgment of the Lord. The same mind may experience two kinds of feelings, and, when directed to the universal Governor, may willingly bear with the ruin of those, whom the Deity hath determined to destroy ; but, on turning its thoughts and reflections to men, suffering under evils, may condole with them in their misery. Such as require apathy and want of natural affection in men of piety, lest they should oppose the divine decree, labour under a very great mistake.

*For I could wish*—Paul could not express the ardour of his affection in any stronger manner than by the declaration here given ; for that love which refuses not to undergo death for the salvation of a friend, deserves to be considered perfect. The additional sentence proves the apostle to be speaking

not of temporal, but eternal death ; and when he says, *from Christ*, an allusion is made to the Greek word *anathema*, which means *a separation from any thing*. Does not separation from Christ mean being excluded from all hopes of salvation ? Paul, therefore, afforded all proof of his love, when he did not doubt to call down upon his own head that curse, which he saw to be suspended over the Jews, with a view to deliver them from its dreadful ruin. Nor is the objection of any weight, that Paul knew his salvation to be founded on God's election, and on this account it could not fail, or be destroyed ; for these more ardent emotions of the mind are hurried off with so much violence, as only to regard and consider the object on which they are fixed. Paul, therefore, did not join the election of God with his vow, but, forgetting the former, his whole mind was earnestly engaged upon the salvation of the Jews. The doubt entertained by many, whether such a desire was lawful or not, may thus be solved—that love keeps within due and constant bounds, which never goes beyond the altar ; if, therefore, we love in God, and not out of the Fountain of all love, the ardour of our most intense affection will never be excessive. This was Paul's case, for while he perceived his own nation to be endowed with so many blessings from God, he embraced the divine gifts among the Jews, and that people on account of these gifts. He felt also most deeply distressed that such endowments should perish, and from this cause his mind, troubled and confounded, burst forth with this strongest and most awful of all vows. I do not adopt the opinion of those commentators, who consider Paul to have uttered this wish from a regard to God alone and not men ; nor do I agree with others, who say he had given himself up merely to the love of men, without any consideration of God ; but I unite the love of

mankind with a zeal for the glory of God. I have not yet given an explanation of what chiefly requires our attention, that the Jews are in this passage regarded as adorned with their own badges and tokens of honour, which distinguished them from the rest of the human race. For God, by his covenant, had so exalted them to the highest pitch of glory, that, when they fell, the divine faith and truth would decay in the world. For the covenant would thus be made void and of none effect, which was said to be ordained to remain firm for ever, and as long as the sun and moon continue; (Ps. lxxii. 5, 7, 17;) so that its abolition would be attended with greater absurdity than the mingling of the whole world in one scene of woful and horrible confusion. A simple and bare comparison of mankind is not, therefore, here presented to our view; for though it would be better for one member to perish rather than the whole body, yet Paul places so high a value upon the Jews, because he clothes them with the character, and, as it is usually denominated, the quality of the elect people of God. This appears more clearly from the context, as we shall afterwards see in its proper place. Although the words, *my kinsmen according to the flesh*, give no new meaning to the passage, yet they contribute very much to amplify and enlarge its force. For, in the first place, to prevent any reader from thinking he had willingly, or of his own accord, embraced an opportunity for quarrelling with the Jews, he intimates that he had not so far divested himself of the feeling of humanity, as not to be deeply affected with the awful and horrible destruction of his own flesh. In the second place, since the gospel preached by Paul must necessarily come out of Sion, he, not without reason, by repeating the same view in a variety of expressions, presses upon the attention of his readers

the commendation given to the race of Jews from whom he was descended. The restraining clause, *according to the flesh*, is not, in my opinion, added, as in some other passages, for the purpose of diminishing the power of the Jews, but rather of giving them increased confidence. For though the Jews had renounced Paul, yet he owns himself to have been descended from that nation, whose election continued yet vigorous and flourishing in the root, though the branches had withered and decayed. Budeus, in his remarks upon the word *anathema*, disagrees with Chrysostom, who confounds *anathēma*, signifying the accursed thing or person separated from God, with *anathēma*, meaning an offering or gift presented to a church or temple, and hung up in some part of the building.

*Who are Israelites*—Paul here evidently assigns a reason why he was so much distressed by the destruction of his nation as to be prepared to redeem it by his own ruin; namely, their descent from Israel. The relative pronoun is here taken in the sense of a causal adverb. Moses (Exod. xxxii. 32) was perplexed with the same anxiety, when he prayed to be blotted out of the book of life, lest the holy and elect race of Abraham should be reduced to nothing. The apostle, therefore, assigns other and still higher reasons besides the feelings of humanity, which ought to make him attached to the Jews, because the Lord had so exalted them, as it were, by the enjoyment of a certain prerogative, that they were separated from the common state of mankind. The high praises, with which he extols their dignity, are proofs of his love, for we generally use only such kind expressions, when we are speaking of those to whom we are attached. And although their ingratitude rendered them unworthy of esteem, on account of the divine gifts which they enjoyed, yet Paul continues to

reverence them for this cause ; and thus conveys to us a useful lesson, that the wicked cannot so spoil and corrupt the good endowments bestowed by Infinite Perfection, as not always to be justly entitled to praise and honour, even when the abusers of these blessings derive nothing else from them but greater disgrace. And, as we ought not to despise the divine gifts enjoyed by the wicked from a hatred to their persons, so, on the contrary, we ought to use great prudence in our conduct towards them, lest they be puffed up by the kindness of our esteem, and the manner in which we speak of their excellences. We ought to be still more cautious not to suffer our praises to have the appearance of flattery. Let us imitate the conduct of Paul, who, while he allows the Jews to enjoy their own dignity and honours, afterwards declares all things to be nothing without Christ. He has sufficient reason for praising them, because they were Israelites ; for Jacob prayed for it as the greatest blessing to his posterity, that “ *his name* should be named on them.” (Gen. xlviii. 16.)

*To whom pertaineth the adoption*—For the scope of all the observations made by Paul is to show, that notwithstanding the Jews had by their revolt impiously divorced themselves from God, yet the light of divine grace was not wholly extinguished among them, as Paul (Rom. iii. 3) says, Shall their unbelief and breach of covenant make the faith of God without effect ? not only because the Lord always preserved for himself some seed as a remnant from the whole multitude of the Jews, but the name of the church yet remained among them by an hereditary right. And although the Israelites had now so stripped themselves of all these honours, that no profit accrued to them from being called the sons of Abraham, yet because the gentiles were in danger of undervaluing the majesty of the gospel in consequence of the fault

of the Jews, Paul does not consider what they deserved, but conceals their dishonour and baseness under the cover of many veils, that the gentiles may be fully persuaded that the gospel had flowed to them from a heavenly fountain, from the temple of God, and from an elect nation. For the Lord had passed by all other nations, selected them as his peculiar people, and adopted them for his sons, as Moses and the prophets frequently testify ; nor is Jehovah content to call them simply his sons, but he sometimes names them his first-born and his pleasant ones. Thus the Lord says, “ Israel is my first-born son ; let my son go, that he may serve me.” (Exod. iv. 22.) “ I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.” (Jer. xxxi. 9.) “ Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? therefore my bowels are troubled for him : I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.” (Jer. xxxi. 20.) By these expressions he is not only desirous to commend his indulgence to Israel, but particularly to prove the power of adoption, under which the promise of the heavenly inheritance is contained.\* *Glory* means the excellence conferred upon that nation by the Lord above all other people, which he effected by many other means, and also by dwelling in the midst of them. For, besides many signs of his presence, he manifested a singular proof of it in the ark, from whence he returned answers and heard his people, that he might exert his power in affording them assistance. On this account it is termed (1 Sam. iv. 22) the glory of God. The following distinction may be observed between the covenants and the promises ; the covenant is conceived in a certain

\* What is adoption ?

That grace whereby we are not only made friends with God, but also his sons and heirs.—*Archbishop Usher's Brief Method of Christian Religion.*

number of express and solemn words, and implies a mutual obligation,—for example, the covenant made with Abraham; but the promises are interspersed in various parts of the Scriptures. For, when God had once entered into covenant with his ancient people, he did not cease to offer them his grace by giving occasionally new promises; and it hence follows, that the promises are referred to the covenant as their only source; and, in the same manner, the peculiar assistance afforded by God to believers, and by which the Almighty manifests his favour towards his own sons, flows from the alone fountain of election. And, since the law was nothing else but the renewal of the covenant, for the purpose of confirming in a better manner its remembrance, the *giving of the law* ought, in this passage, to be restricted to the commands of God. For it is no common honour conferred on the Jewish people to have the Supreme Being their law-giver. For, if other nations boast of their Solons, and their Lycurguses, how much better founded subject and matter for glorying have the Israelites, in claiming the Lord as their legislator! “and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?” (Deut. iv. 32.) The *worship* means the ceremonies and rites of the Jewish ritual, prescribing the proper manner of worshipping God; for those only ought to be considered lawful, which are appointed by a divine rule; and every invention of man, besides this, is the mere profaning of religion.

*Whose are the fathers*—For it is of much importance to be descended from holy men, beloved of the Most High, since God has promised pious parents that he will show their sons mercy even to a thousand generations; and he does this particularly and in express words to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, (Gen.

xvii. 4,) and in other passages. Nor is it of any moment, that pious ancestry, when separated from the fear of the Lord and holiness of life, is of itself vain and unprofitable; for the very same takes place in the worship and glory of the God of truth and love, as various passages in the Prophets prove, but particularly the following, Isa. i. 11; lx. 1; Jer. vii. 4. But, since God condescends to bestow a certain degree of honour on pious progenitors, Paul has very properly reckoned this among the prerogatives of the Jewish people, for they are on that account denominated heirs of the promises, because they had been lineally descended from the patriarchs. (Acts iii.) *Of whom Christ came, &c.*—There is no foundation for referring Christ's descent to the patriarchs, as if Paul confined it to them, for his object was to close the high praise and eulogy bestowed upon the excellence of the Jewish people, by tracing the descent of the Messiah from the Israelites. For it is no small or trifling honour to be united by carnal descent with the Redeemer of the world, since, if Christ honoured the whole human race by uniting himself with us by becoming a partaker of our nature, he bestowed a still greater glory on the Jews, with whom he resolved to form the close bond of alliance and affinity. This favour of relationship, we must always remember, when separated from true piety, so far from being of use, turns rather to the greater condemnation of those who enjoy such a privilege. This passage is remarkable, as affording a clear proof that the two natures are so distinguished, in the Messiah, as to be united at the same time in the very person of the Saviour of sinners. For Paul, by tracing Christ's descent from the Jews, declares his real humanity. The additional sentence, *according to the flesh*, denotes that Christ Jesus possessed something more exalted than the flesh, and a clear distinction is here

made between his human and divine nature. Paul finally unites both these natures, when he says that Christ himself, who was born of the Jews according to the flesh, was *over all, God blessed for ever.* This commendation of our Redeemer, we must carefully observe, pertains only to the one, eternal God. For, in another passage, the apostle says, there is one God, to whom honour and glory are due. (1 Tim. i. 17.) Commentators, who separate this member of the sentence from the rest of the context, with a view to deprive Christ of so clear and excellent a proof of his divinity, endeavour with unblushing effrontery to darken the blaze of light in the fulness of its power. What can be more plain, evident, and undoubted, than this passage,—“Christ of the Jews according to the flesh, who is God eternal, blessed?” And I entertain no doubt that Paul, who experienced a difficulty in contending with the stumbling-block urged concerning the Jews, had purposely raised his mind to the everlasting glory of Christ, not so much on his own private account alone, as to supply others with courage from his own example to rise superior to this scandal against the cross.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel which are of Israel: 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called; 8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9 For this *is* the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

*Not as though*—Because Paul had, in the fervour of his wish and prayer, been hurried off into a state

of ecstacy, he now corrects his former observations, as if desirous to resume the office of teaching, and to recover himself from the immoderate grief and anguish he had experienced. Paul embraces this opportunity for preventing the absurdity of the covenant of God, which was entered into with Abraham, being abolished, and this consequence appeared to result from the destruction of the Jewish people, deplored by the apostle, since the divine favour could not be withdrawn from the Israelites without destroying the covenant entered into with that nation. He shows how the grace of God would constantly remain among the Jewish people, in whatever darkness they might be sunk, so that the truth of the covenant would be unshaken. I prefer the common reading, *not as though*, since the other, *it is impossible*, is to be found in no manuscript, and the following is the sense of the passage : “I do not deplore the destruction of the Jewish nation, because I consider the promise of God, formerly given to Abraham, to be now abrogated and disannulled.” *For they are not all, &c.*—The proposition of the apostle is, that the promise was given in such a manner to Abraham and his seed, that the inheritance has no particular regard to every one of his descendants ; and it hence follows, as a consequence, that the revolt of certain individuals from the Lord, who derive their birth from the father of the faithful, has no effect in preventing the stability, permanence, and steadfastness of the divine covenant. Two points deserve our consideration, if we are desirous to know on what terms the Lord has adopted the posterity of Abraham as his peculiar people : the first is, that the promise of salvation, granted to the friend of God, extends to all his lineal descendants, because it is offered to all without exception. In this way they are justly termed the heirs and successors of the

covenant entered into with Abraham ; or, to adopt the language of Scripture, are the sons of the promise. For, when the Lord determined that the seal of his covenant should be bestowed on Ishmael and Esau, as well as Isaac and Jacob, he afforded a clear proof of his not being entirely estranged from the former. The supporters of an opposite opinion must regard circumcision, which was communicated to them by the command of God, as of no avail or importance ; and none can maintain this sentiment without casting reproach and contempt on Jehovah. The apostle declared that the covenants belonged to the Israelites, though they were sunk in all the darkness of unbelief. They are denominated by Peter, the children of the covenants, (Acts iii. 25,) because they were the sons of the prophets. The second point considered by the apostle is, that the appellation, "sons of the promise," is properly bestowed on the partakers of its power, virtue, and efficacy. In this sense, Paul here asserts, that all the sons of Abraham are not the sons of God, although the Lord had entered into covenant with them, because a few only continued firm in the faith of the covenant ; still, however, the Father of lights himself testifies, (Ezek. xvi. 60—63,) that he established with the Jews an everlasting covenant. Where, in fine, the whole people of the Jews are termed the inheritance, and peculiar treasure of God, their election by the Lord is meant, who offers them the promise of salvation, and confirms it by the sign and symbol of circumcision. But, since many of the Jews reject the divine adoption from their ingratitude, and by no means on this account enjoy its benefit, another distinction between them necessarily exists, arising from a regard to the fulfilment of the promise. To prevent any of his readers from being astonished at not observing the promise fulfilled in a great many Jews, Paul

asserts that they are not comprehended in the real election of God. In other words, the common election of the Israelitish nation does not prevent the Sovereign of infinite holiness from choosing for himself, according to his secret counsel, whatever portion of that people he has determined to save. God's condescension in entering into a covenant of life with one nation, exhibits a striking and distinguished mirror of gratuitous mercy ; but his concealed favour in that peculiar election, which is restricted only to a part of the Israelites, exhibits a still more marked proof of gratuitous pity and clemency to his people. When Paul says, they are not all Israel which are of Israel ; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children, he includes all the descendants of the father of believers under one member of the sentence, and points out by the other those only, who are true and genuine sons of the friend of God, and not a degenerate race. *But, In Isaac shall thy seed be called*—The design of Paul is to show that the secret election of God, although presiding over the external calling, is yet by no means opposed to it, but tends to its confirmation and completion. The apostle, therefore, assumes, in proving both these truths, that the election of God is not confined to the carnal descendants of Abraham, nor is this contained in the condition of the covenant. He adduces a very appropriate example in confirmation of this position ; for if there was any part of the genuine posterity of Abraham which ought not to fail in obtaining the covenant, the oldest of his family ought chiefly to have enjoyed this great privilege. When, however, we see in the two first sons of the patriarch, the younger chosen by a recent promise, (Gen. xxi. 12 ; Heb. xi. 18,) while the older was yet living, how much more might this take place in a long line of descendants ! This

prediction is taken from Gen. xvii. 20, where the Lord answers Abraham, "*As for Ishmael, I have heard thy prayers, but the promised blessing shall be granted to the son of Sarah, and the covenant established with Isaac.*" It hence follows, as a consequence, that certain individuals are, by a singular privilege, chosen from the elect people of the Jews, in whom the common adoption is ratified and rendered efficacious.

*That is, the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God*—Paul now deduces, from the prophecy, a proposition containing his whole meaning, intent, and aim. For if the seed is called in Isaac, not in Ishmael, and this latter is no less a son of the patriarch Abraham than the former, all his children, by lineal descent, cannot be reckoned as his seed; but the promise is in an especial and peculiar manner fulfilled by some, but has not a common and equal regard to all. Children, by lineal descent, mean such as are not distinguished by a more excellent privilege than their being offspring by blood; *children of the promise* are those, who are peculiarly marked out and sealed by their heavenly Father.

*For this is the word of the promise*—The manner in which Paul applies this other prophecy, clearly proves his skill and diligence in handling the word of truth. When the Lord said, (Gen. xviii. 10,) "I will certainly return unto thee, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son;" he intimated that his blessing yet remained to be conferred by giving him another son, for Ishmael was then born, on whom the covenant was not bestowed. Paul, we may here observe, uses great caution, lest he should exasperate the Jews. On this account, he merely points out the fact, and conceals the cause, but the source and fountain will be disclosed on another occasion.

10 And not only *this*, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even by our father Isaac*, 11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

*And not only*—Some sentences are cut off in this chapter, for in the following verse, *but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac*, the apostle leaves off in the middle, and omits entirely the principal verb. The meaning is, “This difference with respect to the inheritance of the promise was not clearly discerned in the sons of Abraham, but a much more striking proof of it was given in Jacob and Esau. Some might object to the unequal condition of Ishmael, who was the son of an handmaid, but Esau and Jacob were twins, and of the same mother ; yet the first is rejected, and the last chosen of the Lord, so that the promise is not equally fulfilled to all the sons of the flesh.” I consider a masculine pronoun to be understood, and not a neuter, as Erasmus ; for Paul has respect to those persons to whom God testified his counsel, for the special election was not only manifested to Abraham, but afterwards also to Rebecca, while she had twins in her womb. *When the children being not yet born*—Paul now begins to point out the reason of this difference, and places it in God’s election. He had hitherto merely observed, in a few words, the difference between the carnal sons of Abraham ; namely, though all by circumcision were made partakers of the covenant, yet the grace of God was not equally efficacious in all, and the sons of the promise enjoy the blessings of the

Most High. He before had either passed over in utter silence the cause of this occurrence, or had certainly made a very obscure allusion to it. He now plainly refers the whole cause to the gratuitous election of God, which in no respect depends on men ; so that nothing can be traced in the salvation of the pious higher than the goodness of God ; nothing, in the destruction of the reprobate, can be discovered higher than the just severity of the Sovereign of the world.\* The first proposition of the apostle is the following :—“ As the blessing of the covenant separates the nation of the Israelites from all other people, so the election of God separates the men of that nation, while he predestinates some to salvation, others to eternal damnation.” The second proposition, “ that there is no other foundation of election, than the mere goodness and mercy of God, which embrace whom he chooses, without paying the least regard to works, even after the fall of Adam.” Third, “ the Lord in his gratuitous election is free, and unrestrained by the necessity of bestowing the same grace equally on all ; nay, he rather passes by such as he will, and chooses for his own according to his will.” Paul briefly comprehends all these propositions in one clause, and will afterwards consider other points. The following words, *when they were not yet born, neither had done any good or evil*, shows that God, in making the difference between them, could have paid no regard to their works, which did

\* Did God then, before he made man, determine to save some, and reject others ?

Yes, surely, before they had done either good or evill, God in his eternall counsel set some apart, upon whom he would in time shew the riches of his mercy, and determined to withhold the same from others, on whom he would shew the severity of his wrath.—*Brief Method of Christian Religion, by Archbishop Usher.* London ; George Badger, 1650.

not yet exist. Sophists, who state that God may elect from among mankind by a respect to their works, since he foresees from their future conduct who may be worthy or undeserving of grace, do not enjoy a greater share of perspicuity than Paul, but attack a principle of theology, which no Christian ought to be ignorant of; namely, "that God can regard nothing in the corrupt nature of man, such as that of Jacob and Esau was, by which he may be induced to do them a kindness." When, therefore, Paul says, that neither of the children had done any good or evil, we must add also the opinion which he had already formed in his mind, of their both being children of Adam, sinners by nature, not possessed of a single particle of righteousness. I do not dwell so long in explaining this passage from any difficulty or uncertainty in understanding the mind of the apostle, but from a desire to show that Paul was not unacquainted with the arguments adduced by the sophists, who, not satisfied with his simple statement, endeavour to support their opinion of election depending on foreseen works, by vain and frivolous distinctions, while they are very indistinctly and imperfectly acquainted with the very first principles of faith. Besides, although the vicious and depraved nature, which is diffused through the whole human race, be of itself sufficient to cause damnation, before it has shown its unholiness by any act or deed; and Esau, therefore, deserved to be rejected, because he was by nature a child of wrath; yet to prevent the least difficulty, as if the state of the elder was worse with respect to the perpetration of any offence or vice than that of the younger, it was necessary for the apostle to exclude the consideration both of transgressions and of virtues. The curse of all in Adam, it must be granted, is a near cause of reprobation; but Paul withdraws us, in the mean

time, from this consideration, that we may learn to rest in the naked and simple good pleasure of God, until he shall have established this doctrine, " that the infinite Sovereign has a sufficiently just cause for election and reprobation in his own will."\*

*That the purpose according to election*—Paul urges, in almost every word, the gratuitous election of God; for had he considered works to have any place in our election, he would have stated the remuneration due to their performance. He opposes to works the purpose of God, which consists in the good pleasure of his will. And to remove all doubt and controversy concerning the subject, he adds, *according to election*, and closes, in a striking manner, *not of works, but of him that calleth*. We will now more carefully weigh the force of the whole passage, by considering the context. If the purpose of God, according to election, is established, because Esau is rejected and Jacob chosen before their birth, or their designing to do any good or evil; to attribute the cause of difference manifested in the treatment of these brothers to their works, would completely subvert the purpose of the God of infinite wisdom. The apostle is desirous to exclude all consideration of works, by subjoining the sentence, *not of works, but of him that calleth*; for he means that the counsel of the Sovereign of the world is determined not from

\* What should move God to make this difference between man and man?

Only his owne pleasure, whereby having purposed to create man for his own glory, forasmuch as he was not bound to shew mercy unto any, and his glory should appeare as well in executing of justice, as in shewing mercy; it seemeth good unto his heavenly wisdome to chuse out a certain number, towards whom he would extend his undeserved mercy, leaving the rest to be spectacles of his justice.—*Brief Method of Christian Religion. London, 1650.*

a consideration of works, but of the call alone. The whole firmness, therefore, and stability of our election, are comprehended in the alone purpose of Jehovah ; merits are of no avail in this case, for they terminate only in death ; there is no dignity in the creature on which the Deity can look, and the kindness of our infinite Father, and that alone, reigns in the choice of his own people. The opinion, therefore, that God elects or reprobates every one according as God foresees the good or bad will be worthy or undeserving of his grace, is false, and contrary to the word of eternal truth. *The older shall serve the younger* —Lo ! how God makes a difference between the children of Isaac, when they were yet lying in their mother's womb. The divine promise was made to the younger, since he was to be obeyed by the elder ; and God thus manifested a peculiar favour to the former, which he refused to bestow on the latter. Although this promise had respect to the birthright, yet God declared his will in it as a type of something greater. This is evident, when we consider how little advantage, according to the flesh, Jacob derived from his primogeniture. On account of this he is exposed to very imminent danger ; compelled, for the purpose of escaping from it, to leave his father's house and his native country, and experiences most inhuman treatment during his banishment. On his return, trembling with fear, and uncertain of his life, he bowed himself down at his brother's feet, and, with earnest entreaties, supplicated his forgiveness. Esau pardoned his offence, and granted him a continuance of more years. Where shall we look for Jacob's dominion over his brother, from whom he is compelled to sue with importunate request for his life ? The Lord, therefore, had promised him something greater than his birth-right. *As it is written, Jacob have I loved*—Paul

confirms, by a still stronger testimony, how much the promise made to Rebecca relates to the present subject, since the spiritual condition of Jacob is witnessed by his dominion, and that of Esau by his slavery. Jacob also obtained this favour by the kindness of the Lord, without any merit of his own. This testimony of the prophet shows the reason why Jehovah bestowed the birthright on Jacob. The passage is taken from the first chapter of Malachi, where the Lord declares his great kindness to the Jews, before he reproaches them on account of their ingratitude. *You have I loved*, says the God of Jacob ; and he immediately adds the beginning of his love, *Was not Jacob Esau's brother ?* What right or claim had your father, the patriarch, from whom you are descended, for being preferred to his brother ? Their right was equal, except that the younger ought, by the law of nature, to have been subject to the older ; " Yet I chose Jacob and rejected Esau, induced by my mercy alone, without any regard to the dignity of his works. And now I had adopted you for my people, that I might still continue to show the same kindness towards the seed of Jacob ; but I had cast off the Edomites, descended from Esau. You are, therefore, worse than the Edomites, since you cannot be induced to worship me, the God of Hosts, from the remembrance of so great kindness." The prophet, indeed, enumerates the earthly blessings which God had bestowed on the Israelites, but they cannot be understood in any other sense than as symbols of his goodness. Where the wrath of God is, death immediately follows ; where his love is manifested, life is the necessary consequence.

14 What shall we say then ? *Is there* unrighteousness with God ? God forbid. 15 For he saith

to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will be hardeneth.

*What shall we say then?*—The flesh never hears any thing concerning God's wisdom, but it immediately distresses itself with perplexing questions, and endeavours, in some measure, to call God to account. We find the apostle, in treating concerning any sublime mystery, answering many absurd objections, which he well knew would agitate and perplex the human mind. Many trifling difficulties hinder the students of Scripture from carefully examining the subject of predestination.\* For the predestination of God is truly a labyrinth, from which the human mind cannot easily extricate itself; and so unjust is the curiosity of man, that it bursts with greater boldness through every opposition, in proportion to the danger which accompanies the inquiry. When the

\* What are we to consider in God's kingdom?

First, the decree made from all eternity; and then the execution thereof accomplished in time.

How was the decree made?

All things whatsoever should in time come to passe, with every small circumstance appertaining therunto, was ordained to be so from all eternitie, by God's certaine and unchangeable counsell.—*Brief Method of Christian Religion. London, 1650.*

subject of predestination is discussed, because the mind cannot limit itself within proper bounds, it immediately, in the height of presumptuous rashness, plunges into the abyss of the greatest difficulties. What remedy shall the pious find for a scene of disorder like this? shall they dismiss from their minds all thoughts about a subject attended with such danger? Surely not. The Holy Scripture has only taught us such subjects as it is our interest to be acquainted with, and every kind of knowledge, which shall limit itself by the boundaries prescribed by the word of God, will be undoubtedly useful. Let us treasure the following observation in our minds,—never to feel the least desire to attain any other knowledge concerning this doctrine, save what is taught us in the Scripture. Where the Lord shuts his sacred mouth, let us also stop our thoughts from advancing one step farther in our inquiries. Since, however, these questions will naturally engage our attention as men, let us attend to Paul, where he shows us how we are to meet the difficulties connected with this subject. *Is there unrighteousness with God*—How prodigious is the frenzy of the human mind, which rather accuses God of injustice, than convicts itself of being influenced by blindness. For Paul did not seek for a subject calculated to excite the opposition of his readers, but immediately commenced the consideration of an impious doubt, which gradually takes possession of the minds of a large portion of mankind, when they hear that God determines the state and condition of every individual of the human race, according to his own will. The kind of injustice imagined by the flesh is, that God has respect to one human being, while he passes by another. Paul, in solving this difficulty, divides the whole subject into two parts; in the first, he treats concerning the elect; in the second, considers the

reprobates. He is desirous that we should meditate on the mercy and kindness of God displayed by the former, while we acknowledge his just judgment towards the latter. In the first place he answers, that the thought deserves the utmost execration, which believes injustice to exist in the Fountain of all righteousness ; and, in the second place, Paul makes it plain in what way no injustice can be manifested either towards the elect or reprobate. The very objection, without going any farther, clearly proves that the cause why God elects some, and rejects others, is to be sought for merely in his will and purpose ; for if the difference between these two characters depended upon a regard to their works, Paul would have discussed the question concerning God's injustice in a very unnecessary manner, since no suspicion could possibly arise against the perfect justice of the Disposer of all things, if he treats every son and daughter of Adam according to their works. It is worthy of notice also, that Paul discussed this subject with freedom and candour, although he knew very well that violent railings and horrible blasphemies would be immediately raised against this part of divine truth. He does not conceal the occasion it would afford for rage and tumultuous opposition, on hearing that each individual had his own lot assigned by the secret will of the Most High. He still proceeds, and, without hesitation or circumlocution, declares the doctrine which he had learned from the Holy Spirit. Hence it follows, that no allowance can be made for the delicacy of those, who affect greater prudence than the Spirit of truth in answering the difficulties or removing the stumbling-blocks occasioned by this doctrine. The modesty and sobriety of this class of divines would merit approbation, should they restrain their minds from too great curiosity, and bridle their tongues

from indulging in immoderate licentiousness in their attacks. What presumptuous boldness is it to impose a check upon the Spirit of holiness, and upon Paul, the apostle of the gentiles ? May there continue to flourish in the church of God sufficient magnanimity in all ages to prevent the teachers of piety from being ashamed of the simple profession of the true doctrine, however much it may be hated ; and may they refute, with boldness and Christian love, all the calumnies of impiety. *For he saith to Moses*—None can accuse God of any injustice with respect to the elect, for he deigns to show them pity according to the good pleasure of his will.\* Yet the flesh finds cause for murmuring even in this case, for it cannot allow the Sovereign of infinite justice to condescend to show favour to one in preference to another without assigning a cause. A certain class of theologians, because they consider it absurd that some men should be preferred to others, enter into controversy with God, in the effrontery of pride, as if he showed more respect to some persons than was right. Let us consider in what way Paul defends the justice of God. In the first place, he does not endeavour to involve in obscurity a doctrine which excited hatred, but persists in asserting it with inflexible constancy. He takes no pains in seeking for reasons which are calculated to diminish the harshness of predestination, but is content to restrain the impure barkings

\* How doth Christ rule his subjects ?

By making the redemption which he hath wrought effectuall in the elect, calling those whom by his propheticall office he hath taught to embrace the benefits offered unto them, and governing them, being called both by these outward ordinances which he hath instituted in the church, and by the inward operation of his blessed Spirit.—*Archbishop Usher's Brief Method of Christian Religion.*

of its opponents by testimonies of Scripture. The apology produced by Paul to show God was not unjust, because he is merciful to whom he thinks fit, might appear cold ; but because God's own authority, as it requires the aid and support of no other, is abundantly sufficient of itself, Paul was content to leave the judge of quick and dead to avenge his own right. The answer adduced by Paul is that which the Lord gave Moses, when he offered supplications for the salvation of the whole people : *I will have mercy, said Jehovah, on whom I will have mercy, and have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* (Exod. xxxiii. 15.) God, by this very declaration, proved that he is himself a debtor to none ; that every blessing bestowed upon the elect flows from gratuitous kindness, and is freely granted to whom he pleases ; that no cause, which is superior to his own will, can be conceived or devised, why he entertains kind feelings or manifests kind actions to some of the children of Adam, and not to all. The import of the passage appears to be the following : “ I, Jehovah, will never deprive that person of my pity, to whom I have once decreed to extend it, and I will follow with perpetual kindness that child of Adam on whom I have resolved, by my purpose, to confer such compassion.” The Lord thus assigns the supreme cause of his bestowing grace to be his own voluntary decree, and intimates, at the same time, that he has peculiarly destined his mercy to certain individuals ; for the very precise nature of the language used on this occasion excludes all foreign causes, as when we assert our freedom to act, we say we will do whatever action we intend to perform. He expressly uses the relative pronoun, to show that pity would not be extended promiscuously to all. The uncaused Cause of all effects is deprived of this liberty, if election is entirely

bound down by external causes. The alone cause of salvation is expressed in the two words made use of by Moses; for one imports the gratuitous and liberal bestowment of a favour or kindness, the other means to be affected with pity. Paul thus clearly establishes the point to be proved,—the mercy of God is not forced or bound under any restriction, but pursues whatever direction it chooses, and follows merely its own inclination, because it is altogether gratuitous.

*Therefore it is not of him that willeth*—The apostle deduces from this testimony, the incontrovertible conclusion, that our election is to be attributed to no industry, no zeal, no exertion and effort of our own, but is to be entirely ascribed to the decree of God. Away with the thought that the elect are chosen on account of their own deserts, or because they have secured by any means the favour of God to themselves, or are possessed of the smallest grain of dignity which might be calculated to draw the attention of Infinite Wisdom to their personal characters. The word *running* means zeal and contention. Let us simply consider, that our being reckoned among the elect does not arise from any power in our will, from any zeal or effort, however ardent, of our own, but must be entirely attributed to the goodness of God, which elects of its own free choice, as the children of an eternal Father, such as have not exhibited either freedom of will, or persevering exertion, or even a single thought for the attainment of so glorious a privilege. There is great folly in the argument, that we are possessed of a certain energy in our zeal, but of such a kind as can effect nothing of itself unless aided by the mercy of Jehovah, since the apostle shows that we possess nothing of our own by excluding all our efforts. To infer that we have the power either of running or willing is a mere

cavil, which Paul denies, and plainly asserts our will, or ardour in the race, has not the smallest influence in procuring our election. Those divines, on the other hand, merit the severest reproof, who continue to indulge in drowsiness and sloth, that they may afford room and opportunity for the grace of God to act; since, although their own ardour can accomplish nothing, yet the heavenly zeal, inspired by the Father of lights, is endowed with active efficacy. We do not make these observations for the purpose of choking or smothering, by means of our own stiff-necked obstinacy and indolence, the sparks of divine light and life inspired into us by the Spirit of truth; but with a view to make us know that every possession, every power, and every boon we have, spring from the Giver of all good; and we may hence be taught to ask and hope for all things from his hands, and to confess and acknowledge that every blessing we enjoy is his gift, while, with filial fear and trembling, we earnestly endeavour, with all diligence and study, to secure our salvation. Pelagius has endeavoured, by another sophistical but mean cavil, to escape from adopting the opinion of Paul, and has asserted our election not to depend merely on our willing and running, since the mercy of God assists our powers. Augustine answers this writer with great acuteness and solidity; for if it is asserted that election does not depend on the will of man, because it is a partial, not sole cause; it may, on the contrary, be stated with equal truth, that election does not arise from the mercy of God, which is only a partial cause, but from the will and the zeal of the elected. For if the co-operation is mutual, the praise must be reciprocal; but this supposition, by assigning election to the power of man, involves an incontrovertible absurdity, and we must, therefore, determine so to ascribe the salvation of the elect,

whom God has decreed to save, to the divine mercy alone, as to leave nothing to the industry of man. The opinion entertained of this passage by some, has no more plausibility than the former interpretations, for they consider it to be spoken in the character of the impious; since, what consistency is there in perverting passages of Scripture, which clearly assert the righteousness of God, to the purpose of upbraiding him with tyranny? Is it probable that Paul would have patiently suffered the Scriptures to be turned into gross mockery, when he could so easily have refuted his opponents? Such are the artifices contrived by interpreters, who foolishly measure this incomparable mystery of God by their own sense and judgment. This doctrine was too harsh for their fine and delicate ears to be considered worthy of our apostle. It would, however, have been more to their honour to bend their own stubbornness in obedience to the Spirit of love, than to be so completely devoted to their own gross imaginations.

*For the Scripture saith*—Paul now comes to the second branch of his subject—the rejection of the wicked—and, as the absurdity appears to be greater in this divine procedure, he exerts himself the more to prove that God, so far from meriting blame in reprobating whomsoever he chooses, displays admirable wisdom and equity. Paul quotes his testimony from Exod. ix. 16, where the Lord says he had raised up Pharaoh for to show the unconquerable nature of divine power, which completely overcame and subdued the Egyptian monarch, while he obstinately endeavoured to resist the Lord of Hosts; and left an undoubted proof, that no human power, however great, can bear, much less break, the arm of Omnipotence. Behold a specimen of what the Lord willed to accomplish in Pharaoh. Two things must

be here taken into consideration — first, the predestination of Pharaoh to his destruction, which is referred to the just and secret counsel of the Lord ; secondly, the end and design intended by it,—that the name of Jehovah may be declared throughout all the earth. For if the very hardening of Pharaoh was the cause of God's name being declared, it is impious to bring any accusation of injustice against infinite holiness. Many interpreters, from a desire to soften this passage, corrupt it. I observe, the word here translated *raised thee up*, means, in Hebrew, *made thee stand*, or *appointed thee*. God is here desirous to show that Pharaoh's obstinacy was no obstacle to prevent the deliverance of his people from bondage ; that his fury was foreseen, and plans contrived, by the Lord of all glory, for restraining his violence ; that God had, on purpose, raised Pharaoh up, with the express design of making him a distinguished monument of his insuperable power. It is folly to draw any argument from Pharaoh's preservation having been continued for a considerable time, since the question now under consideration relates to the cause of the commencement of his career. Many circumstances may befall men, from various quarters, to retard their counsels, and prevent the onward course of their actions ; but God says, Pharaoh was raised up by his divine hand, and went out from him ; nay, the very character of the Egyptian monarch was given him by the Lord. To prevent the vain imagination, that Pharaoh had been driven on from Heaven, by some universal and confused impulse, to rush into the fury by which he was actuated, the cause or design is specified, showing, that God had known the conduct Pharaoh would adopt, and he designedly destined and appointed him for the very use and purpose to which he was devoted. The folly of disputing with God is hence apparent ;

as if he was bound to give an account of his conduct; for he comes forward himself, on this occasion, anticipates the objection adduced against him, declares that reprobates issue from the secret fountain of his providence, and wills his name to be declared by them in all the earth.

*Therefore on whom he will he hath compassion—* The conclusion is here drawn, with respect both to the elect and the reprobate, by the apostle himself; for it is impossible to apply it to any other person, since, in the next sentence, he enters into a discussion with his opponent, and considers his objections. It is therefore undoubted, as already hinted, that Paul speaks his own sentiments in this passage, to the following effect: “God honours with mercy whomsoever he pleaseth according to his own will; and strikes with the severity of justice any person whom he chooses.” Paul wishes to satisfy our minds with respect to the diversity of character between the elect and reprobate, by considering that it pleased God to enlighten some for salvation, and to blind others for destruction; nor in our inquiries are we to seek a cause higher than the divine will. He does not permit us to go beyond the sentences, *on whom he will*, and *whom he will*. The word *hardening*, when attributed to God in Scripture, not only means permission, (as some trifling theologians determine,) but the action of divine wrath; for all external circumstances, which contribute to blind the reprobates, are instruments of the divine indignation. Satan, also, himself, the internal efficacious agent, is so completely the servant of the Most High, as to act only by his command. The frivolous attempt of the schoolmen to avoid the difficulty by foreknowledge, is completely subverted; for Paul does not say, that the ruin of the wicked is foreseen by the Lord, but ordained by his counsel, decree, and will. Solomon, also, teaches

that the destruction of the wicked was not only fore-known, but they were made on purpose for the day of evil. (Prov. xvi. 4.)\*

\* It is true, God would not man should perish, as touching his *signified will*, for he offered unto man a law, promises, threatenings, and counsels, which things, if he had embraced, he had surely lived. But, if we have respect unto that other *mighty and effectual will*, doubtless we cannot deny, but God would have men to perish. For, as we read in the 16th of Proverbs, 4th verse, "God made all things for his own self, even the ungodly to an evil day;" and Paul teacheth us, that "God is like unto a potter, and that he maketh some vessels to honour, and some to dishonour." And this is also the same will whereby God ruleth, governeth, and moderateth the naughty desires and sins of men, at his own pleasure, as it hath been said before. By this will, God delivereth the wicked unto a reprobate sense, sendeth in the Chaldeans to lead away his people into captivity, addeth efficacy unto illusions, would have the wicked to be seduced, and is said to harden them.

We must not think that God doth so rule the world, as he should sit like an idle man in a watch-tower, and there do nothing; or that he suffereth the world and inferior things to have scope to wander at will, as doth a horse which hath the reins at liberty. Neither is that true, which is alleged by some, that God neither willeth, nor nilleth, those evils or sins, as if he thought not upon them at all; seeing what things soever are in all the world, they do belong to his care and providence.

But I would that these men did weigh with themselves, by what testimony of the Scripture they be able to confirm that permission of theirs, which they so obstinately retain. I am not ignorant that they allege for themselves that which is said in the 81st psalm: "I permitted them to their own hearts' lust." But, if we confer with the true Hebrew text, it will appear more feeble, and of less proof, than they be aware of. For the verb *schillach*, in the Hebrew, is in the conjugation *Piel*, which, by the force of the conjugation, signifieth a vehement action; neither is it convenient that we should abate the force thereof, through expounding of the word by *permission*. Nay, rather, it agrees with the phrase of Paul, wherein it is said, in the epistle to the Romans, that "God delivered the wicked to a reprobate sense;" and it is

19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against

rather showed, that God cast away the wicked, than permitted them. But whereto did he permit them, or cast them off? Verily to their own wicked desires, as He saith, they should be wholly possessed and governed by them. And in this sense is that Hebrew word oftentimes used in the Scriptures. In Genesis, it is showed, that "God cast man out of paradise;" and who would there interpret the word *cast out*, by the word *permitted*, seeing he rather drove and thrust them out from thence? Moreover, in the 19th chapter, the angels say, "And the Lord hath sent us out to destroy Sodom," (Gen. xix. 13,) in which place, *to send forth* cannot be the self-same that is *to permit*. And it is written, in Ezekiel, "It brought forth the branch," (Ezek. xvii. 6,) while, notwithstanding a vine doth not permit the branch to come forth of it, but doth rather enforce it to bud out. Wherefore let the interpreter beware, lest, in that place, he interpret the Hebrew word *schillach* by *permitting*.

The very action of man cannot be sustained, preserved, and stirred up, without the common influence of God, by which all things are governed and preserved; for truly it is said, "In God we be, we live, and are moved." Therefore, the defect, which properly is sin, proceedeth not of God; but the action, which is a natural thing, wherein the defect sticketh, cannot be drawn forth but by the common influence of God.

Many times, also, do devils know, for that they be present at the counsels of God, and are called on to execute his commandments. For so, when God was taking counsel to deceive Ahab, the devil stood forth, and promised that he would be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets of Ahab; (1 Kings xxiii. 22;) and a certain other spirit obtained of God to torment and trouble Job. And it is no wonder, for the devil is the minister of God to do execution. Howbeit, when devils be thus called to the counsels of God, they see what he hath appointed them to do.—*Peter Martyr's Common Places.*

At the first view, it seemeth an absurd thing, that some should be created of God to perish. Yet the Scripture saith this, that the potter doth make some vessels unto honour, and some to dishonour; and that God ordained Pharaoh, that he

God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to

might show his power in him. It is also said, that he, to show his wrath, suffered, with much patience, the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. Also, he maketh the ungodly for the evil day. (Prov. xvi. 4.)—Peter Martyr on *Predestination*.

God is the sovereign Agent and first Mover in every motion and inclination of *the creature*. *Men*, yea, *angels* too, are but secondary agents, subordinate causes, and, as it were, instruments to do his will. Now, the *First Cause* hath such a necessary influence into all the operations of *second causes*, that if the concurrence thereof be withheld, their operations must cease. The *providence of God*, in the *acting of the creatures*, by his actuation of them, is like the motion of a *clock*, or other artificial *engine*, consisting of many *wheels*, one within another, some bigger, some lesser; but all depend upon the *first great wheel*, which moveth all the rest, and without which none of the rest can move. In God's hands are the *hearts* of the greatest *kings*, (and how much more those of the meanest persons!) which he turneth and bendeth which way soever he pleaseth. (Prov. xxi. 1.) Be the *ax* never so sharp and strong, yet can it not cut any thing unless the *hand* of the workman move it; and then it cutteth but where he would have it, and that more or less, as he putteth more or less strength unto it. No more can these, whatsoever strength of *wit* or *power* they are endued with, bring their own *devices* to pass, but when, and where, and so far forth only as the *Lord* thinketh fit to make use of them. *Pharaoh's chariot* may hurry him apace to the place of his *destruction*, because God had so appointed; but anon God taketh off the *wheels*, and the chariot can move no farther, but leaveth him helpless in the midst of the channel. So vain are all *men's devices* as to the serving of their own *ends*, and the accomplishment of their own *desires*! Yet doth Almighty God so *order* these otherwise *vain things*, by his over-ruling *providence*, as to make them subservient to his everlasting counsels. For all things serve him. (Ps. cxix. 91.) Happy, happy thrice, they that do him *voluntary service*! they can say with *David*, and in his sense, Behold, O Lord, how that I am thy servant; (Ps. cxvi. ;) that have devoted themselves faithfully; and, accordingly, bend their endeavours to do him true and *laudable service*, by obeying his *revealed will*.

make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dis-honour ?

*Thou wilt say, therefore*—The flesh is thrown into great confusion, when the destruction of those, who are predestinated to death, is referred to the will of God. The apostle, therefore, has again recourse to the anticipating of the objections of his opponents, for he saw the mouths of the wicked would be all opened to assail, with the utmost violence, the justice of God ; and he depicts their feeling with great elegance, for, not satisfied with defending themselves, they arraign God as guilty in their stead, and, after laying on him the blame of their own damnation, display their indignation against his invincible power. They are, indeed, obliged to yield, but with murmuring discontent, because they are unable to resist his will ; and, while they ascribe power to Jehovah, advance against him a certain accusation of tyranny. In this way, the sophists, in their schools, so prate concerning what they denominate his absolute justice ; as if, forgetful of this his distinguishing attribute, he was desirous to make an experiment of the force of his absolute power, dominion, and authority, by

But, certainly, whether they will or no, though they think of nothing less, they shall *serve him* to the furtherance and accomplishment of his *secret will*. As we find, *my servant David* often, as his *servant* in the one kind ; so we sometimes meet with *my servant Nebuchadnezzar*, as his *servant* in the other kind.

The counsels and purposes of God are secret ; and thou art not to inquire with scrupulous curiosity into the dispensations and courses of his providence, which ordereth the occasions, and the seasons, and the other circumstances of God's punishments. God is the principal efficient cause and agent in all punishments and judgments : “ Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it ? ” (Amos iii.) “ I will bring the evil upon his house.” Whatsoever thou doest, never make question of God's justice.—*Bishop Sanderson's Sermons.*

throwing all things, in a perverse and mischievous manner, into one general scene of disorder and confusion. Thus the wicked reason in this passage : “ What cause has God to be angry with us, since he has made us such as we are, and drives us where he chooses, according to his irresistible nod ? What does God effect by our ruin and destruction, save the avenging of his own work in us ? It is not for us to wage war with the Almighty ; for, though we should resist and oppose him with all our powers, he will still gain a complete victory. Our ruin, therefore, will afford a striking proof of the iniquity of his judgment, and his treatment of us is only distinguished by the abuse of his immoderate and unbridled power.” Hear Paul’s answer to these vile accusations.

*Nay, but, O man, who art thou ?—“ Who art thou that enterest into a dispute and contention with God ?”* Paul, in this first answer, taking his argument from the state and condition of man, merely checks the wickedness of the blasphemy of his opponent. Paul will soon adduce another reason by which he will vindicate the justice of God from every charge. Paul evidently assigns no cause superior to the will of God. Paul might easily have answered, by showing the difference between the two characters to be founded on just grounds ; why, then, has he not recourse to so compendious a manner of treating his adversaries, while he assigns the highest place to the will of God, as being in itself sufficient, without any addition, to stand in the place of all causes ? Paul would not have neglected refuting the objection, that God reprobates or elects, according to his own will, those whom he does not honour with his favour, or love gratuitously, had he considered it to be false. The impious object, that men are exempted from guilt, if the will of God has the chief

part in the salvation of the elect, or destruction of the reprobate. Does Paul deny it? Nay; his answer confirms this truth—that God determines to do with mankind what he pleases, and that men rise up with unavailing fury to contest it, since the Maker of the world assigns to his creatures, by his own right, whatever lot he chooses. Great dis-honour is put on the Holy Ghost by calumniators, who assert that Paul, being unable to answer the objections of his adversaries, has recourse to reproach. For Paul was unwilling to adduce, in the beginning, arguments which were at hand, and calculated to maintain and assert the justice of God, because they could not be fully understood. Nay, the apostle so manages his second argument, as not to enter into a full defence, since he will demonstrate the justice of God to such of us as consider and weigh his evidence with religious humility and reverence. He adopts the most suitable plan, by admonishing man of his condition, to the following effect: “Why should you, who are a man, and acknowledge yourself to be dust and ashes, contend with the Lord of infinite honour and glory concerning a subject, which you are unable to understand?” The apostle did not adduce all that could be advanced on this subject, but accommodated himself to our ignorance. Human pride is discontented because Paul asserts, without assigning a cause, that men are rejected or reprobated by the secret counsel of the Lord of life, as if the silence of the Spirit of God arose from an inability to produce a reason. Does not the Spirit of Truth admonish us, by his silence, of the deep reverence with which we ought to adore a mystery that our finite mental faculties cannot comprehend? Does he not thus curb the vain pride of human curiosity? Let man, therefore, learn that the Source of all knowledge does not re-

frain from addressing us on this deep mystery on any other account, but the clearness with which he sees that the immensity of his wisdom\* cannot be comprehended by our limited capacities, and, in pity to our weakness, he invites us to the exercise of modesty and sobriety. *Shall the thing formed, &c.*—Paul continues to insist on our considering the will of God to be just, although the reason may be concealed from our view. For Paul proves that God is deprived of his right, if he does not freely determine concerning his creatures according to his pleasure. This may appear harsh to some delicate ears. Some consider that God is much dishonoured by bestowing upon him such an unlimited will. Is the pride of these divines to be preferred to the simplicity of Paul, who lays it down as a mark of the humility of believers, to fix their attention steadily upon the power of an infinite arm, and not limit its operations by their own weak judgment?

*Hath not the potter power?*—The reason, why the thing formed ought not to contend with him that forms it, arises from the latter acting only according to his just right. The word *power* does not mean that the potter has *strength and vigour* to act according to an “unbridled appetite and desire,” but is possessed of a faculty to act with the “greatest rectitude.” Paul does not wish to confer on the Judge of quick and dead an inordinate power, but such as he is justly and deservedly entitled to use. As the potter

\* Wherein doth God's wisdom consist?

In perfect knowledge of all things that either are, or might be.

In what sort doth God know all things? Doth he, as we do, see one thing after another?

No, but with *one sight*, he *continually beholdeth all things distinctly*, whether they be past, present, or to come.—*Archbishop Usher's Brief Method of Christian Religion.*

takes nothing from the clay, into whatever form he may mould it, so eternal justice takes nothing from the state and condition in which man was created. We ought, however, never to forget that God is robbed of part of his honour, if he does not enjoy such power over man, as to be the Arbiter of life and death?

22 *What if* God, willing to show *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ;  
23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory ?

*What if*—Paul briefly proves, in this second answer, that, however incomprehensible the counsel of God is in predestination, no more complaints can be made against the destruction of the reprobates, than the salvation of the elect. Paul does not assign such a cause for divine election, as to give a satisfactory reason for the election of one individual and of the reprobation of another. For it would have been unworthy of the character of Deity to expose to human censure those truths, which are concealed in the secret counsel of unerring and infinite Wisdom, since no revelation was ever to take place of this inscrutable mystery. The apostle, while he prevents his readers from curiously investigating those subjects, which transcend and elude the grasp and range of human intellect, clearly shows that justice alone manifests itself in the predestination of unerring wisdom and holiness. This whole sentence is interrogative, and the following meaning is understood : “ Who can accuse God of injustice, or appoint a day for his trial ? In every proceeding of

unerring Love, nothing presents itself to the view of the observer, but the strictest rule and principle of justice." In carefully examining the language of Paul, for the purpose of ascertaining his meaning more fully, the following chain of reasoning presents itself: "Vessels are prepared, that is, devoted and destined to destruction; there are also vessels of wrath, namely, made and formed for the very purpose, that they may be proofs of the vengeance and indignation of the Most High. What is there to be blamed in this dispensation of infinite Justice, if the Lord bears with them for some time with patience, without immediately inflicting the judgment prepared for them, and thus affords clear proofs of his severity, which are calculated to affright others by such awful examples; while the extent of his mercy to the elect is made more evident by such a procedure in his divine providence? The cause, why vessels are fitted for destruction, is concealed in the eternal and inscrutable counsel of God; and it becomes the worms of the dust to adore, and not to scrutinize, the justice of the Supreme Being. God displays his pity and compassion by the vessels of mercy, whom he uses as instruments of his condescending love; the reprobate are vessels of wrath, since they are the servants of the Lord, employed in displaying his judgments.

*That he might make known the riches*—Paul here assigns the second reason, by which God's glory is manifested in the destruction of the wicked, because the fulness and extent of the divine goodness towards the elect is more clearly and completely confirmed. For in what respect are the elect made to differ from the reprobates, but in their deliverance by the Lord from the same whirlpool of destruction? Nor is this wonderful and miraculous deliverance effected by any peculiar and special merit of their own, but by the

gratuitous kindness of all-perfect Love. We are, therefore, obliged to praise, in higher strains of exultation, the immense clemency of sovereign mercy towards the elect, when we have a proper regard to the misery and wretchedness of those reprobates who are overwhelmed by the wrath of infinite purity. *Glory* means, in this passage, *divine mercy*, for the chief praise and honour of the splendour of the Most High consist in acts of kindness. Thus (Eph. i. 6, 13) Paul, after stating we were adopted by God *to the praise of the glory of his grace*, shortly after adds, that we were sealed by the *Spirit of our inheritance to the praise of his glory*, without mentioning grace. Paul, therefore, was desirous to signify that the elect were instruments, or organs, by which the sovereign Disposer of all events exercises his mercy, for the purpose of glorifying his name in their actions and conduct. Paul, in this second member of the sentence, more expressly asserts, that God prepares the elect for glory, when he had before simply stated, that the reprobates were vessels prepared for destruction. Both of these preparations depend, without doubt, on the secret counsel of God; for, had it not been the case, the apostle would have made the reprobates cast or throw themselves into destruction. He now means, their lot was assigned them before their birth.

24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. 27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the

number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved : 28 For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness ; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

*Even us, whom he hath called*—Two consequences follow from the dispute in which Paul has been engaged concerning the liberty of the divine election ; first, that the grace of God is not so limited to the Jewish people as to be unable to extend itself to other nations, and to be diffused over the whole world. In the second place, it is not so confined to the Jews as not to reach all the sons of Abraham according to the flesh, without any exception. For, if God's election is founded on his good pleasure alone, it exists wherever his will determines to choose. This position concerning election makes way for the observations that are connected both with the calling of the gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, the former of which was considered as absurd on account of its novelty, and the latter appeared altogether unworthy of the divine character. He treats of the calling of the gentiles first, because it was not calculated to cause so much offence as the rejection of the Israelites. Paul says, vessels of the mercy of God, which he hath chosen for the glory of his name, are selected equally from gentiles and Jews. The relative *whom*, though Paul does not strictly adhere to grammatical accuracy, implies that we are the vessels of the glory of God, who are taken partly from the Jews, and partly from the gentiles. Paul here, from the calling of Jehovah, proves that God makes no difference of

nation in his election. For, if our descent from the gentiles did not prevent God from calling us, it is evident the heathens were not debarred from the kingdom of God, and the covenant of eternal salvation.

*As he saith also in Osee*—Paul now says, that the calling of the gentiles ought not to be regarded as a new thing, since the prophet Hosea had foretold it (Hos. ii. 23) long before ; see 1 Peter ii. 10. Paul's reasoning is very plain ; the only difficulty consists in the application of the prophecy, for there can be no doubt that Hosea was speaking concerning the Jews in this passage. For Jehovah, being offended with them on account of their crimes, threatens that they shall be no longer his people. He afterwards comforts them, and says to those who were not his people, “Thou art my people ; and to those who were not beloved, Thou art my beloved.” Paul endeavours to apply this prophecy, which belonged expressly to the Jews, to the gentiles. Paul, according to the best explanation of this difficulty hitherto given, reasons in the following manner : “The Jewish nation had experienced the same impediments against their becoming partakers of salvation which had befallen the heathens ; as God, therefore, formerly had kindly received into his favour the Jews whom he had rejected and banished from their land, so he now shows the same kindness to the gentiles.” Although this interpretation can be vindicated, yet it appears to be forced ; and I propose the following, which I consider better suited to the passage,—“that the consolation afforded the Jews by the prophet, applies with equal propriety to the gentiles.” For it is neither new, unusual, nor unreasonable for the prophets, after they have proclaimed the inflicting of God's vengeance on the Jews, because of their crimes, to direct their attention to the kingdom of Christ, which was to be

propagated over the whole earth. For, when the Jews had so provoked the anger of God by their sins, as to deserve to be rejected by him, no hope of salvation remained except in their conversion to Christ, by whom the covenant of grace is renewed ; and as it was first founded, so it is now restored in him, after it has been lost. Since, also, Christ is the undoubted and only refuge, when affairs are in a desperate state, no solid, lasting comfort can be bestowed on wretched sinners, who feel the anger of God to be suspended over their heads, but in the offer of Christ Jesus. It is, as we have stated, usual for the prophets, after humbling a people, who have been sore amazed and thoroughly affrighted by the threatenings of divine indignation, to recall them to Christ, the only sanctuary and place of refuge for desperate offenders. Wherever the kingdom of Christ is erected, that heavenly city Jerusalem is at the same time built, to which citizens flock from all parts of the world. This was particularly the case in this prophecy ; for since the Jews were banished from the family of God, they were brought down to a level with the rest of mankind, and only equal to the gentiles. It hence follows that the prophecy of Hosea is well suited to the present instance ; for God declares, after he has brought the Jews to the same standard with the gentiles, he will collect a church from among strangers, and say to them “who were not his people, Thou shalt be my people.” *Them my people, which were not my people*—God had now divorced his people, and so deprived them of all their dignity as to leave them in no respect superior to the rest of the gentiles, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. And although those, whom God has destined to himself as sons by his eternal counsel, continue always sons, yet the Scripture frequently does not reckon them among the children of their heavenly Father, unless

their election has been proved and supported by their calling. We are hence taught, that we should not form our judgment, much less pronounce our opinion, concerning the election of God, except so far as he manifests himself by his own undoubted signs. Thus, after Paul had pointed out to the Ephesians that their election and adoption had been predestinated by God before the foundation of the world, (Eph. ii. 1,) he not long after testifies their former alienation from the Most High, namely, during the period when Jehovah had not yet manifested his own love to them, although he would finally fold them in the arms of his eternal mercy. In this place, therefore, those are called *not beloved*, to whom the eternal justice of the Lord gives proofs of his indignation rather than love. Moreover, it is a certain truth, that the wrath of infinite Holiness rests upon the whole race of mankind, until the Lord has reconciled them to himself by adoption. The feminine gender is used here according to the context of the passage in Hosea; for he had said, a daughter was born to him, and God called her name not beloved, and testified by this type that he would no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, who would thus be compelled to acknowledge themselves hated of the Lord. As rejection was the cause of the divine hatred, so the adoption of those (Hos. i. 10) who had been strangers for a time was, according to the prophet, the commencement of the love of their heavenly Father.

*Isaiah also crieth*—Paul now goes to the second part of his subject, and he was desirous to avoid it, lest he should exasperate the minds of his countrymen. Paul intentionally introduces Isaiah crying, not speaking, for the purpose of exciting greater attention. The words of the prophet (Isa. x. 21) are manifestly designed to prevent the Jews from

boasting too much in the flesh. The statement is awful, that a small number only out of so large a multitude shall obtain salvation. For the prophet, after describing the destruction and desolation of the Jewish people, although, to prevent believers from considering the covenant of God to be entirely annihilated, he leaves them some hope still remaining of grace, yet he confines it to a very few. But, since the prophet made this prediction concerning his own time, we must consider how Paul can properly suit it to his own purpose. The apostle states, "when the Lord was desirous to deliver his people from the Jewish captivity, he determined that the benefit of this deliverance should be extended only to a very few out of that immense crowd of people, who justly deserved to be called the remnant of destruction, when compared with the great number of the people that he suffered to perish in exile. This carnal restoration of the Jews to their own land prefigured, nay, was the beginning of the true renewal of the church of God, which is accomplished in Christ. What then happened, must be now completed with much greater certainty in the progress and fulfilment of so glorious a deliverance."

*For he will finish the work, and cut it short*—The true sense, omitting the great variety of interpretations, seems to be the following: The Lord will so shorten and cut off his people, that the remnant will have the appearance of a certain wasting and consumption, and present the similitude and vestige of an immense ruin. The small number that shall remain after the consumption will be the work of the righteousness of the Lord, or rather serve to testify his righteousness through the whole world. Some interpreters, earnestly desirous to display their philosophical acuteness, have imagined the doctrine of the gospel to be called a consummation, which is the

meaning of one of the expressions in Isaiah, because it abrogates the ceremonial rites, and, therefore, deserves to be considered a compendious abridgment of the law. The gospel, in my opinion, ought to be regarded as the finishing and consumption of the law. The Greek translator has not only mistaken the sense of this passage, but of Isa. x. 22, 23; xxviii. 22; and Ezek. xi. 13, where the prophet says, according to that version, "O Lord God! wilt thou perfectly complete the remnant of Israel?" although the following is the real meaning of the passage, "Wilt thou bring to utter destruction the remnant of Israel?" This has arisen from inattention to the ambiguity of the original word, which means both to *complete* and to *destroy*. Isaiah uses two substantive nouns, consumption and determination, or declaration; and the Septuagint has displayed a very striking and unreasonable affectation of the Hebrew phraseology. For what occasion was there to involve a sentence, sufficiently clear of itself, by an obscure figure? Isaiah, also, speaks hyperbolically in this instance, by calling consumption a diminishing, which takes place in the case of any remarkable overthrow.

*And as Isaiah said before*—The prophet (Isa. i. 9) deplores in this passage the devastation of Israel during his own life. The destruction of the Jewish people, therefore, is no new event and unprecedented example; for the nation of the Israelites can lay claim to no other prerogative but what they derive from their parents, who had on former occasions experienced the severe trials and howling tempests of affliction in so striking a manner, according to the evangelical prophet Isaiah, that they had nearly become as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah. The difference was, that a very small number was preserved, as seed, to prevent the entire extinction of the very

name of Israel, by blotting them out with an everlasting forgetfulness and oblivion. For God was obliged to be always mindful of his promise, and to manifest an abiding sense of mercy amidst the severest punishments.

30 What shall we say then ? That the gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore ? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law : for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone ; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence : and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

*What shall we say then ?*—The apostle, that he may leave the Jews no occasion for complaints and murmuring against God, begins by pointing out reasons, adapted to the human capacity, why the Jewish nation had been thus cast off by the Lord of Hosts. Those interpreters act with great folly, and invert the whole order of the divine procedure, who endeavour to establish and advance such causes above the secret predestination of God, which ought, as Paul has already taught us, to be considered the greatest and highest of all causes. As predestination is superior to all other causes, so the depravity, profligacy, and abandoned wickedness of the impious afford ground and supply materials for the judgments of unerring Rectitude. Since, however, the subject was difficult, Paul has recourse to consultation, as if he proposed a question in consequence of his doubting

what could be said on the point under discussion. *That the gentiles, which followed not after righteousness*—Nothing appeared more absurd or inconsistent than that the gentiles, who wallowed in all the wantonness of fleshly indulgences, without paying the least attention to justice, should be invited to a participation of salvation, and to the obtaining of righteousness, while, on the other hand, the Jews, who had devoted themselves with great zeal and ardour to the works of the law, should be driven away from all the rewards and enjoyments of righteousness. Paul makes a simple and unvarnished statement of the reason of this uncommon paradox, refrains from all harshness of expression, calculated to exasperate the Jews, and shows that the righteousness unto which the gentiles attained consisted in faith, and depended, therefore, on the mercy of God, not any peculiar dignity in man. The apostle proves the zeal of the law, which influenced the mind and conduct of the Jews, to be preposterous, since they were earnestly labouring to be justified by works, and striving to attain an eminence that no child of Adam could reach. Besides this circumstance, they stumbled at Christ, who alone opens a door for the attainment of righteousness. The design of the apostle in the first member of this sentence was to exalt the mere grace and favour of God, that no other cause might be sought for in the calling of the gentiles save the favour with which the Preserver of all mankind vouchsafed to embrace those, who were utterly unworthy of so great a blessing. Paul expressly calls it the righteousness of Jehovah, from which alone salvation springs; and he intimates, that the righteousness of the heathens consists in gratuitous reconciliation, when he states that it emanates from faith. Every divine who imagines that the gentiles are justified because they have obtained the Spirit of rege-

neration by means of faith, entirely mistakes the mind and sentiments of Paul. For there would have been no truth in their apprehending what they did not seek, unless God had embraced them in his gratuitous love, when straying and wandering from all the paths of truth and peace, and offered them a righteousness, which it was utterly impossible for the gentiles to pursue with any ardour or zeal, since it was unknown to them, and could not therefore flourish with any vigour. It must, also, be carefully observed, that the gentiles obtained righteousness only by faith, because the Father of lights prevented their faith by his own grace and favour. For, had the heathens by means of their faith aspired first after righteousness, they would, in that case, have *followed after* this inestimable gift. Faith, therefore, itself is a part and portion of divine grace.\*

\* How are we said to be justified by faith ?

Not as though we were just for the worthinesse of this vertue, for in such respect Christ alone is our righteousness ; but because faith, and faith onely, is the instrument fit to apprehend and receive, not to worke or procure our justification ; and so to knit us unto Christ, that wee may be made partakers of all his benefits.

Is it in man's power to attain this faith and holinesse ?

No ; but God worketh them in his children according to that measure which he in his children sees fit.

What is that holinesse which accompanieth this justifying faith ?

A gift of God whereby the heart of the believer is withdrawne from evill, and converted to newnesse of life.

What be the parts of Sanctification ?

Mortification, whereby our naturall corruption is subdued ; and vivification or quickening, whereby inherent holinesse is renewed in us.

How is the grace of God communicated to the elect, of whom the Catholike church doth consist ?

By that wonderful union whereby Christ and his Church are made one, so that all the elect being ingrafted into him, grow together into one Mystical Body whereof he is the Head.—*Archbishop Usher's Brief Method of Christian Religion.*

*But Israel, which followed*—Paul freely acknowledges, what appeared incredible, that we need not be astonished to find the Jews accomplish nothing by their strenuous and vigorous pursuit of righteousness, because, by running out of their way, they wearied themselves to no purpose. I consider Paul, in the first part of this verse, to have meant, by *the law of righteousness*, the righteousness of the law; and, in the conclusion of the sentence, he repeats the same words in a different sense, understanding them to import the form or rule of righteousness. The sum of the whole is—“that Israel, by following after *the law of righteousness*, had not attained the true manner of righteousness, which is prescribed in the law.” Paul uses an elegant figure of speech,\* when he states that legal righteousness was the cause why the Jews attained not to the law of righteousness.

*Not by faith, but as it were by works*—Paul justly points out the rejection of those, who endeavour to obtain salvation by the confidence of works, since the rash and ruinous zeal of the supporters of merits is generally considered to be well founded, without reflecting that they do every thing in their power entirely to destroy and abolish faith, without which no salvation can be expected. Should they gain their point, all true righteousness would be for ever annihilated. Paul, it is evident, institutes a comparison between faith and the merits of works, as being entirely contrary in their nature, qualities, and tendency. Since, therefore, the confidence of works blocks up more than any thing else our way to the attainment of righteousness, it is necessary for us to bid an eternal adieu to all works, and to lean and place our reliance upon the alone Source of all perfection. This example of the Jews is well calculated to affrighten all those who labour to obtain the

\* Paronomasia.

kingdom of God by works; for we have already proved, that Paul does not call ceremonial observances the works of the law. The apostle opposes faith to the merit of works, and keeps both his eyes directed, with the most unvarying attention, to the alone clemency of the Supreme Being, without casting a single glance towards his own proper merit. *For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone* — Christ\* is given us for righteousness, and every human being, who obtrudes the righteousness of works upon God, endeavours to deprive his only Saviour of his office. What greater absurdity can be imagined than to expect to obtain righteousness by merit, which leaves the sinner no hopes of pardon? It is an undoubted truth that all men, who rely upon the confidence derived from works under the vain pretence of showing an ardent zeal for righteousness, wage war with the most holy Lord God, with all the fury of madness. It is easily known how the confiders in works stumble at Christ, for, if we do not acknowledge our own sinfulness, our utter want of personal righteousness, and poverty with respect to works of our own, we obscure the dignity of Christ, which consists in his being the light, salvation, life, resurrection, righteousness, and medicine of all believers. Why is he possessed of all these honours, but to enjoy the power of giving sight to the blind, salvation to the condemned, life to the dead, resurrection to dust and ashes, pardon of sins to the most abandoned, health and cure of disease to bodily sick-

\* How, then, must sinful man look to be justified in the sight of God?

By the mercy of God alone, whereby he freely bestoweth his Sonne upon him, imputing man's sinnes unto Christ, and Christ's righteousness unto man, whereby the sinner, being possessed of Jesus Christ, obtaineth of God the remission of sinnes, and imputation of righteousness. — *Archbishop Usher's Brief Method of Christian Religion.*

ness, and the most complicated maladies ? Nay, if we arrogate any righteousness to ourselves, we struggle in some measure with the power of Christ, since his office consists as much in breaking down and humbling all the pride of the flesh, as in assisting, giving rest, and affording comfort to those who are weary and heavy laden. This passage is properly quoted, for God threatens, (Isa. viii. 14,) "*that he will be a stone of stumbling*, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel ; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Since Christ himself is the very God who spoke by the prophet, we need not be surprised to find it fulfilled in him. When Paul calls Christ a rock of offence, he informs us, we need not be surprised to find the stumblers at this rock, from perverse obstinacy, making no progress in the way of righteousness, since they altogether despised the road pointed out, and made easy to them, by the Lord of all'flesh. Christ is not of himself, and in his own proper character, *a stone of stumbling* ; he is so from accident, in consequence of the depravity of man, as the apostle afterwards proves.

*And whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed*—Paul added this quotation, from Isaiah xxviii. 16, for the comfort of the pious, as if he had said, "We, believers, need not be afraid, or overwhelmed with fear instead of confidence, because Christ is termed *the stone of stumbling* ; since, while he is laid down as *a rock* for the ruin of unbelievers who stumble against him, he proves to be the life and resurrection of the pious. The Messiah is, according to prediction, an offence and scandal to rebels and unbelievers, but a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation to all the pious ; and all, who rely on him, shall not make haste." Paul, following the Septuagint, translates

it, *shall not be ashamed*; and Peter (1. ii. 2) gives the version, *shall not be confounded*, instead of, *shall not make haste*.

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## CHAPTER X.

1 BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

We here see with what solicitude this holy servant of God meets the causes of stumbling among the Jews; for, that he may still continue to mitigate the harshness of any of his remarks in setting forth the rejection of the Jewish nation, he testifies, as before, his heart's desire for them, and proves it from the effect; because their salvation was carefully regarded by Paul in his prayers to the Lord. For this affection springs from a true and genuine love. He was, indeed, under the necessity of manifesting his love to his own nation from which he was descended, perhaps, on account of another cause; for his doctrine never would have been received by the Jews, had they considered him to be their professed enemy. They would have, likewise, suspected his conduct in revolting to the gentiles; because his apostacy from the law would have been considered by them, as

we have hinted in the last chapter, to have proceeded from his hatred to the Jews.

*For I bear them record*—The object of this attestation of Paul, in favour of his countrymen, was to give them confidence in his attachment; for it was a sufficiently just ground for his pitying, and not hating them, since he was fully persuaded that their error, and the cause of their being deceived, proceeded from ignorance, not a hardened depravity of mind. Nay, he saw that they were induced to persecute the kingdom of Christ from some love and affection to the Lord of all glory. We may hence learn the result we must expect to experience from obeying and following our good intentions. To allege these as the motives of our conduct, when we are accused, is generally considered to be a very proper excuse, nay, one of the very best. Very great numbers, at the present time, are prevented, under this pretext, from zealously and ardently devoting themselves to the study of the word of God, because they think that sins arising from ignorance, without any determined wickedness, nay, even with good intention, will be excused and forgiven. Who, among us, can bear to hear any excuse offered in defence of the Jews for crucifying the Saviour of sinners, for the barbarous cruelty they manifested towards the apostles, and their unceasing efforts to destroy and extinguish the good news of everlasting life? Is it not in the power of the Israelites to produce the same defence of their conduct in these instances of shocking persecution, as we can of our neglect of the study of divine truth? Away with such vain and shuffling apologies, derived from good intention; if we seek God with our whole heart, let us follow the way which alone leads to his enjoyment. It is better, according to Augustine, even to halt in the road, than to run, with all our might, out

of the proper path. Never let us forget the great truth, impressed upon our minds by Lactantius, if we are sincerely desirous to become religious--that no genuine religion can exist, which is not combined with the study of the word of God. When, also, we observe the wanderers, even with a good intention, sinking in ruin, how many thousand deaths must await those, who, enjoying the divine illumination, err from the paths of life, with the eyes of their mind open, and the full consent of their wills.

*For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness—Lo!* how they erred from an inconsiderate zeal, and a desire to exalt their own righteousness ! their entire ignorance of the divine righteousness plunged them in irretrievable destruction and a foolish confidence. The apostle opposes the righteousness of God to that of man ; in the first place, because they cannot stand together, in consequence of their contrariety to each other, so that the divine righteousness is subverted as soon as man elevates his own. In the second place, it is, undoubtedly, called the divine righteousness, because it is a gift from the Most High ; as it is termed human righteousness, since men seek to attain it either by their own exertions, or to recommend themselves, by its means, to the Divine Being. No human being, desirous to be justified in himself, can possibly be subject to the righteousness of God. Is it not a sense of our own utter destitution, which compels us to seek for righteousness from another ? Men, as already stated, are clothed with the divine righteousness by faith, because Christ's righteousness is imputed. Paul casts great dishonour upon the pride which puffs up the self-conceit of hypocrites, although they conceal it under the specious disguise of zeal, and he declares they have cast off the yoke of the God of heaven and earth, refused to pay him allegiance, and ranged

themselves as adversaries and rebels to his spotless righteousness.

*For Christ is the end of the law*—Complement, or, as translated by Erasmus, perfection of the law is tolerably well suited to this passage ; yet, since the common reading is almost universally received, and does not ill agree with the context, I leave it to my readers to make their own choice. The apostle refutes the objection, which might be formed, that the Jews had pursued the right path, because they had devoted themselves to the righteousness of the law. In proving the falsehood of this opinion, Paul shows the folly of those interpreters of the law, who seek for justification by its works, for the law was given to lead and conduct us to another righteousness. Every precept, every promise, every doctrine of the law looks to Christ as the mark which ought to be kept constantly in view. All the judicial, ceremonial, ritual, and moral parts of the law are directed to the Messiah as their completion. Nor can this be attained, unless, feeling ourselves to be destitute, robbed, and spoiled of all righteousness, to be overwhelmed with shame and confusion of face on the remembrance of our manifold and aggravated transgressions, we seek for gratuitous righteousness from our alone Saviour and Redeemer Christ Jesus the Lord. The consequence of such a view of the law as the Jews maintained, was a deserved censure of that people for their depraved abuse of the precepts of the Most High, who, in their folly, converted into a stumbling-block what was intended and calculated to afford them assistance. Nay, it is evident that they had basely mutilated the law of God, cast away the very soul of the statutes and testimonies of Jehovah, and snatched only at the dead body of the letter. For, notwithstanding the law promises a reward to all who observe and keep its precepts, yet,

since it has thrown the whole race of mortals into one common sink of guilt and iniquity, it has substituted a new righteousness in Christ, which is not acquired by the merits of our works, but is presented to us gratuitously, and received by faith. Thus the righteousness of faith, as we have already seen in the first chapter, received a testimony to its necessity and character from the law. This is a striking passage to prove that the law in all its parts has respect to Christ: none can properly understand it who does not constantly aim at the Messiah as the end and scope of the Mosaic dispensation.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) 7 Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Paul now compares the righteousness of faith and works, with a view to show the very great disagreement which exists between these two different principles, for the opposition between contrary subjects

shines forth with more brightness and distinctness by means of comparison. For this purpose the apostle does not quote the writings and predictions of the prophets, but the testimony of Moses, the great lawgiver of the Israelites, that they might understand the law not to have been given by Moses with a view to keep them relying on the confidence inspired by their works, but rather to lead them to Christ. For, although Paul had cited the prophets as witnesses of his opinion, the difficulty still remained, why the law should prescribe another form of righteousness. He discusses the subject with great adroitness and force, and establishes the righteousness of faith from the very doctrine of the law. The law is taken in a twofold sense, when Paul makes it in this passage agree with faith, while in other parts of this epistle he opposes the righteousness of Christ to the righteousness of the law. At one time the law means the whole doctrine delivered by Moses; at another, that part of it which peculiarly belonged to his ministry, and is contained in its precepts, rewards, and punishments. The chief office which Moses had generally assigned him was the instruction of the people concerning the true rule of piety. Granting the truth of this position, it was his bounden duty to preach faith and repentance; but faith cannot be taught without offering the gratuitous promises of the divine mercy, and on this account he was obliged to be a preacher of the gospel, and it appears from many parts of his writings that he performed this part of his ministry with great fidelity. Moses could not teach the people repentance without showing them the necessary duties required by the Lord in their conduct and manner of life, which are comprehended in the precepts of the law. It was his bounden duty to add promises and threatenings, for the purpose of instil-

ling into the minds of the people a love of righteousness, and engraving a hatred of iniquity. He depicted in lively colours the rewards which were laid up for the righteous, and denounced the woes and awful punishments which were reserved for sinners. The duty now remaining to be performed by the people, was to consider in how many different ways the curses of God were incurred by disobedience, and how utterly impossible it was to be able to merit the blessings of God by works. In utter despair, therefore, of attaining happiness by their own righteousness, they fly to the harbour of divine goodness, and to Christ himself, the only refuge for lost and ruined sinners. Such was the end and design of the ministry of Moses. Since, however, the promises of the gospel occur only in a scattered manner in Moses, and are attended with some obscurity, while the precepts and rewards appointed for the observers of the law more frequently abound, the function of teaching the character of the true righteousness of works is properly and peculiarly attributed to the Jewish lawgiver. He also points out the nature and character of the remuneration bestowed upon the observance of the law, and of the vengeance and punishment which are threatened against and await transgression. In this manner (John i. 17) Moses himself is compared with Christ, when it is said, "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Whenever the name of the law is taken in this limited and restricted sense, Moses is opposed to Christ, and we must then carefully consider, what the law contains in itself when separated from the gospel. I must refer what I have said here concerning the righteousness of the law, not to the whole office, duty, and function of Moses, but to that part of it which was peculiarly intrusted to the legislator of the descendants of Abraham. *For Moses describes—Paul uses*

the word *writes* instead of *describes*. The passage quoted occurs Levit. xviii. 5, where the Lord promises eternal life to the observers of his law. See Ezek. xx. 11; xiii. 21; Luke x. 28; Gal. iii. 12. The apostle took the passage in the sense of everlasting, not temporal life, although some interpreters confine it to the continuance of our existence in time. The following is the argument of the apostle: "Since no son or daughter of Adam can obtain the righteousness prescribed by the law, without the exact fulfilment of all its parts, and all mankind are invariably very remote from the attainment of this perfection, it is impossible for any one to procure salvation by this method. Israel, therefore, displayed the very height of folly by expecting to reach the demands of the righteousness of the law, from which we are all excluded." Paul argues that the promise is of no use, because we are utterly unable to perform the condition which it requires. How vain the subtlety of those, who endeavour to establish the righteousness of works by quoting the promises of the law. For a certain curse awaits us, if we rely on these, and all hope of securing salvation is for ever cut off. How low and mean is the folly and stupidity of the Roman Catholics, who consider it sufficient to establish the proof of merit, by quoting with great keenness the bare promises, as establishing the point at issue; for they say, unerring Truth did not in vain promise life to his worshippers. Their blindness prevents them from observing, that the promise of life was given with a view to make the sense and feeling of their transgressions so to impress on all a terror of death, as to teach them to fly, being driven by their want of righteousness, to the bosom of their Redeemer and almighty Saviour.

*But the righteousness which is of faith*—Two causes make this passage appear difficult, for Paul seems to

have taken these words in an improper sense, and also changed them from the acceptation in which they were understood by Moses. We will consider the meaning of the words, after we have carefully examined their application. The passage cited is taken from Deut. xxx. 12, where Moses, as in the last quotation, is speaking concerning the doctrine of the law. Paul applies the words of Moses to the promises of the gospel. The difficulty is easily solved in the following manner. Moses shows how easy it is for the Jews to obtain life, since the will of God is not hidden from them, nor far off, but placed before them, and constantly in their view. Had the apostle been speaking of the law alone, the argument would have been frivolous and irrelevant, for the law of God cannot be obeyed with greater facility, when kept constantly in view, than at a great distance. Moses, therefore, does not intend the law alone, but generally the whole doctrine of God, which also comprehends the gospel. For the word of the law, not even the least syllable of it, is never of itself in our heart, until it is engrafted by the faith of the gospel. Even after regeneration, the word of the law cannot be properly said to be in our hearts, because it requires perfection, from which the faithful themselves are also placed at a great distance. But the word of the gospel, although it does not entirely fill our heart, yet it takes up its abode there, for it offers the pardon of imperfection and defect. Moses is particularly desirous to commend, in the 30th and 4th chapters of Deuteronomy, God's great kindness to his people, because he had taken them under his discipline and government. This high commendation could not have been given on account of the law alone. The circumstance of Moses preaching relative to the Jews regulating their lives, and forming their conduct by the rule and command of the law, is not op-

posed to this interpretation, for the spirit of regeneration is united with the gratuitous righteousness of faith. He infers the one from the other, for the observance of the law springs from the faith of Christ. This opinion undoubtedly depends upon the principle laid down in the former part of the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, "that the Lord will circumcise the heart of the Jews, and of their seed." It is not difficult, therefore, to refute the objections of those, who state that Moses is treating in this chapter of good works. I allow the truth of this statement, but I assert there is no absurdity in deriving the observance of the law from its own fountain, namely, the righteousness of faith. We must now explain the meaning of the words. *Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven*—Moses mentions the heaven and sea as places more remote, and which could not easily be approached by the labours and ingenuity of men. Paul, as if some spiritual mystery was concealed under these words, applies them to the death and resurrection of Christ. Should any reader find fault with this interpretation, as being too forced and subtle, he should consider that the object of the apostle was not to explain the passage of Moses very carefully, but only to apply it to the subject he was discussing and examining. He does not, therefore, quote the passage from Deuteronomy with great accuracy, but accommodates the testimony of Moses more nearly to his own purpose, by polishing the extracts from the original. Moses spoke of places inaccessible; Paul mentioned such places as are most concealed from our sight, but can be viewed by the eye of faith. If, therefore, you consider the amplification and embellishing of the passage as it occurs in Moses, you will not consider that the apostle had recourse to any violent or unreasonable change from the original, but will rather acknowledge an elegant al-

lusion is made to the sea and heaven without any loss of the sense. We will now give a simple statement of the meaning of Paul. "Since the security and confidence of our salvation rest upon two foundations, namely, eternal life procured for us by our Saviour, and the victory of death, which was completely triumphed over by Jesus Christ our Lord ; Paul teaches us in this passage that our faith, by means of the word of the gospel, relies on both these bases, as supports which cannot be shaken. For Christ swallowed up death by dying on the cross, and by his resurrection received the power of bestowing eternal life. Nor is there any object more worthy of our utmost and most unceasing desire than Christ's death and resurrection, which are now communicated to us in the gospel of truth. Paul instructs us that the death and resurrection of Christ, on which alone our salvation depends, are included under the righteousness of faith, and, therefore, clearly prove the last-mentioned divine gift to be abundantly sufficient for conferring upon us everlasting life and happiness."

*Who shall ascend into heaven?* means, "who knows, whether the inheritance of an eternal and heavenly life may await us beyond the tomb?" *Who shall descend into the deep?* conveys the following sense— "Who knows whether the everlasting destruction of the soul may not accompany and be associated with the death of our mortal body?" Paul teaches us, that both these doubts are removed by the righteousness of faith, for the doubt proposed in the first question would bring Christ down from his heavenly mansions ; that implied in the latter, would bring up Christ again from the dead. "For Christ's ascension into heaven ought to inspire our faith with such assured confidence concerning our final possession of eternal life, that the mere doubt of any infidel, whether an heavenly inheritance be prepared for

believers, in whose name and on whose account Jesus has already entered the gates of eternal bliss, is almost the same as to drag down the Saviour of the lost from his possession and inheritance in the mansions of glory. In the same manner, since Jesus, who has the keys of hell and death, has entered the horrors of the abodes of endless misery, for the express purpose of delivering us from that region of Satan and the fallen angels, to entertain the smallest doubt whether believers still continue to be condemned to this unutterable misery, is to make void, nay, even to deny, the death of the Son of God."

*But what saith it*—Paul, after removing the obstacles to faith by his negative remarks, points out the means for obtaining righteousness by his affirmative observations. He uses an interrogative style for the purpose of exciting attention, and showing the immense difference between the righteousness of the law and of the gospel; since the former presents itself to our observation at so great a distance as to prevent the whole race of Adam from deigning to approach the severity of its exactions; while the latter approaches so near as to invite us, in a familiar manner, to make a trial of the enjoyments which divine grace is calculated to bestow. *The word is nigh thee*—The apostle, it must be observed, that he may prevent men's minds from going astray in circuitous paths, and being led off from salvation, prescribes the limits of the word of God, within whose precincts they are to confine all their thoughts, wills, and affections. He orders believers "to be satisfied with the word of truth, and admonishes them to contemplate in this mirror the secrets of heaven, which are calculated to dazzle the sight with their splendour, to surprise and delight the ears with the melody and harmony of sounds, and to over-

whelm the mind itself in wonder and astonishment." The minds of believers derive, from this passage, great consolation concerning the certainty of the word of God, for they can truly lean and assent unto it with no less confidence and security than they can depend on the most realizing and present sight and appearance of terrestrial objects. Moses, we must also remark, proposes the word of God, on which the stability, calmness, and tranquillity of our confidence in salvation depend. *That is, the word of faith*—Paul is justified in assuming *the word of faith*, for the doctrine of the law can by no means give peace and tranquillity to the conscience, nor supply it with a foundation on which contentment ought to be built. Paul does not, by any means, exclude the other parts of the Scriptures of truth, nor the very precepts of the law; but he is desirous to make righteousness mean the remission of sins, even without the exact obedience required by the law. The word of the gospel, therefore, which commands us not to merit righteousness by works, but to embrace it, when offered, by faith, is sufficient to give peace to the minds, and to establish the salvation of men. *Faith*, by metonymy, is used for promise, that is, the gospel itself, since it has relation to faith. For an antithesis must be here understood, by which the law is distinctly known from the gospel; and this mark of distinction induces us to conclude, that, as the law requires works, so the gospel requires men to bring nothing else but faith for the purpose of receiving the grace of God. The sentence, *which we preach*, is added, to prevent any suspicion of an opposition between Moses and the apostle. For Paul testifies that he agrees very well with Moses in the ministry of the gospel, since the latter has also placed our happiness in nothing else than the gratuitous promise of divine grace.

*That if thou shalt confess*—This is rather an allusion to Moses than a proper and true translation; for, in all probability, the Jewish lawgiver understood by the word *mouth*, taking a part for the whole, *face or sight*. The apostle made the following very happy allusion to the word *mouth*—“Since the Lord proposes his word before our lips, we are undoubtedly called by him to make confession of the Lord Jesus. The word of God ought to bring forth fruit, wherever it exists, and the confession of the mouth is fruit. Confession, by an inversion of order, not unfrequent in Scripture, is placed before faith. The best order would be to make confession of the mouth to follow confidence of the heart, from which it springs. But he makes a proper confession of Jesus Christ, who adorns him with his own power and efficacy, and acknowledges him to possess those qualities and characteristic excellencies, which have been bestowed upon him by the Father of lights, and are described in the gospel. Paul makes an express mention of Christ’s resurrection alone, in such a manner as not to exclude his death; because the Messiah, by his resurrection, perfectly completed all points required for our salvation. For, although redemption and satisfaction, by which we are reconciled to God, were finished by his death, yet victory and triumph over sin, death, and Satan, were procured by his resurrection.. Hence, also, we enjoy righteousness, newness of life, and the hope of a blessed immortality. On this account, the resurrection alone is often proposed for the purpose of inspiring us with confidence of our salvation; not to withdraw our minds from contemplating the death and crucifixion of our Redeemer, but because it bears undoubted testimony to the fruit and effect of his death; nay, in fine, the resurrection of the Lamb of God contains, in itself, his death. We have already

touched on this subject in the sixth chapter. Besides, Paul does not merely require an historical faith of the death of Christ, but includes in the resurrection itself the end and design for which the Son of God died. Why has Christ risen from the dead? Has it not been the design of God the Father to restore us all to life by raising the Son of Man from the grave? Notwithstanding Christ was endowed with the power of raising himself, yet the resurrection is generally, in Scripture, assigned to God the Father.

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*—This passage may assist us in understanding justification by faith, for he shows that we obtain righteousness because we embrace the goodness of God offered us in the gospel; and we are therefore just, because we believe that God is propitious to us in Christ. “The seat of faith, it deserves to be observed, is not placed in the brain, but the heart; not that I wish to enter into any dispute concerning the part of the body which is the seat of faith, but, since the word *heart* generally means a serious, sincere, and ardent affection, I am desirous to show the confidence of faith to be a firm, efficacious, and operative principle in all the emotions and feelings of the soul, not a mere naked notion of the head.”

*With the mouth confession is made unto salvation*—Some may be surprised to find Paul assign a portion of our salvation to faith, after he has so repeatedly, on former occasions, testified that we are saved by faith alone. We ought not to infer that confession is the cause of our salvation, for the apostle merely wished to show how God accomplishes this great work, namely, by making faith, which he hath put into our hearts, to manifest and display itself by confession. Nay, Paul was simply desirous to point out the character of true faith, from which confes-

sion springs, as a fruit, that none might pretend to make the vain and empty title of faith stand for faith itself; for the heart ought to glow with zeal and ardour for God's glory, in exact proportion as it has sent forth, by the outward confession of the lips, the light of its own flame. Every justified person is now in possession of salvation, and his belief with the heart for salvation is not less than the confession which he makes with his mouth. Paul's distinction refers the cause of justification to faith, and he afterwards shows what is required for the purpose of completing belief. None can believe with the heart, without making a confession with his mouth; and this necessity for making confession a perpetual consequence of faith, never implies the idea of ascribing salvation to the act of confession. What answer will the proud boasters of our times make to this passage of Paul, who glory in a certain imaginary faith, which is secreted in the inmost recesses of their hearts, and completely supersedes the confession of the mouth as an empty and vain thing? For it is the very summit of trifling to assert, that fire exists where there is neither flame nor heat.

11 For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

*For the Scripture saith*—After he had assigned the causes why God had deservedly rejected the Jews, he returns to lay claim to the calling of the gentiles, which forms another part of the question that he is now discussing. Since, therefore, Paul had pointed

out the method by which men attain salvation, and this is equally common and open to the heathens and the Jews, he now, in the first place, by the universality of his expression, distinctly extends it to the gentiles ; and, in the second, calls the heathens expressly to participate in its blessings. He repeats the quotation from Isaiah xxviii. 16, for the purpose of giving more weight to his opinion, and to show, at the same time, how well the prophecies published concerning Christ agree with the law.

*For there is no difference*—If the confidence of faith alone is required, wherever it is found the kindness of God will there manifest itself for salvation, and, in this case, there will be no difference of country or nation. Paul here subjoins the most unanswerable reason ; for, if the Creator and Maker of the whole world is the God of all mankind, he will manifest his kindness and benignity to all, by whom he has been invoked and acknowledged as the Supreme Being. For, since his mercy is immense, it must necessarily diffuse itself among all those by whom it has been desired and sought. *Rich* is here taken in an active sense, and means *kind* and *beneficent*. Is the riches of our heavenly Father diminished by his liberality ? Are our divine blessings lessened, because others are enriched by the abundant affluence of his grace ? There is, therefore, no occasion why some should envy the blessings of others, as if they were, on this account, deprived of any boon they themselves enjoyed. Although this reasoning was very forcible, yet he confirms it by the prophecy of Joel, which equally includes the whole world by his adopting a universal particle. The context in Joel will fully satisfy us that his prediction applies to this passage of Paul, (Joel ii. 28,) not only on account of his prophesying concerning the kingdom of Christ, but because, hav-

ing stated in the preface that the wrath of God would burst forth in a very awful manner, he promises, in the midst of the fierceness of the indignation of the God of Hosts, salvation to all who shall call upon the name of the Lord. (See Acts i. 24.) The conclusion follows, that the grace of God penetrates the very depths of death, if men cry with supplication from such an abyss. Who then will dare to drive the gentiles away from a God of such infinite love?

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel: for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

I will not long detain my reader in stating and refuting the opinions of others; I will freely state my own sentiments, and leave every one to adopt his own views of the passage. The mutual connexion between the calling of the gentiles and the ministry of Paul must be first considered, if we are desirous to understand the full meaning of this beautiful climax, since the applause due to his ministerial functions depended on the praise bestowed on the vocation of the heathens. It was absolutely necessary for Paul to establish beyond doubt the calling of the gentiles, as well as his own ministry, that he might

not appear to scatter abroad, in a light and foolish manner, the grace of God, by withholding from the children of the Highest the bread intended for their use, while he gave it to dogs. The apostle establishes both points at once. A clear, orderly, and full examination of the different parts of the climax will enable us to understand more fully the coherence of the thread of the discourse. Both the Jews and gentiles declare, by their calling upon the name of the Lord, their belief in him; for no human being can properly and truly call upon his name, unless such invoking of the Most High has been preceded by a just knowledge of his character. Moreover, faith arises from the word of truth, and the word of infinite holiness is preached in no climate and no nation but by the special providence and appointment of unerring Wisdom. Faith, therefore, exists where God is invoked; the seed of the divine word hath preceded the existence of faith, and the calling of the Father of all must be ushered in by preaching the everlasting gospel. A clear and undoubted sign of the divine kindness is granted to that nation where the calling of God is attended with so powerful an effect, and productive of such fruits. It will hence be fully established, that the gentiles, who have been associated by the Lord with the Jews in the mutual participation of one common salvation, ought not to be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. For, as the preaching of the gospel is the cause of faith among the gentiles, so the divine mission, by means of which God was desirous to provide for their salvation, is the cause of preaching. We will now carefully consider each sentence apart.

*How shall they call*—Paul was desirous to unite in this passage the calling upon God with faith, since there is a most intimate connexion between these two subjects. The Christian, who calls on God,

enters the only haven of salvation, and as a son betakes himself to the most certain kind of refuge, even the bosom of the very best and most loving of Fathers, where he rests secure under the protection of his care, is cherished and nourished by the love and indulgence of the God of all consolation, is aided and assisted by his kindness, and supported, defended, and protected by the power of Omnipotence. This high attainment is the privilege of a true child of God, whose mind is so fully persuaded and assured of the fatherly kindness of the Lord of heaven and earth, as to feel the most undaunted courage and boldness in expecting to receive any kind of blessing at his hands. The utmost confidence must necessarily be placed in the protection of infinite Love by every believer, who calls upon the Lord, since the apostle is only speaking of that kind of invoking Jehovah, which is approved by the Giver of all good. Hypocrites also call on God, but not for salvation, since they do it without any feeling of true faith. This clearly evinces the folly of all those schoolmen who present themselves before God with much doubt and hesitation, because they do not rely with the confidence of faith upon his grace and mercy. How very different are the sentiments of Paul, who assumes it as an acknowledged axiom, that believers cannot offer up any supplications in an acceptable manner to the Hearer of prayer, unless they are certainly assured of success in making their approaches to the throne of grace. For the apostle is not speaking of an implicit faith, but of that unwavering certainty, which our minds conceive and feel of the paternal kindness of the Lord, when he reconciles us to himself by his gospel, and adopts us among his children. We have an access opened for us to the Father of glory by this alone confidence, as Paul also instructs us.

(Eph. iii. 12.) That, we may safely infer, is true faith, which inspires its votaries with the delightful feeling of calling upon God; for every believer, who has once tasted the goodness of the Prince of Peace, must always aspire to the love, procured for him by Jesus, with every kind of prayer. *How shall they believe in him of whom*—The sum of the whole is: “That we are, in some measure, mute, until the promise of God opens our mouth to pray, and the Prophet Zechariah (xiii. 9) observes the same order: ‘I will say unto them, Ye are my people; and they shall say unto me, Thou art our God.’ For it is not for us to form a God by our own imagination; and no knowledge of him has the seal and impress of truth, which is not derived from the Scriptures of unerring Wisdom. If any one conceives God to be good, merely from his own sense and feeling, he is not under the influence of a certain and solid faith, but of an unstable and fleeting imagination; and, on this account, the word is required for our attaining a right knowledge of God.” The apostle speaks of no other word than what is preached, because this is the usual manner which God takes for granting faith. Every disputant, who argues from this passage that God cannot instil a knowledge of himself into the human race by any other method than preaching, betrays an ignorance of the mind and sentiments of the apostle, who paid a regard only to the ordinary dispensation of God, without wishing to prescribe law to the operations of his grace.

*How shall they preach unless they be sent?*—Paul means, “that, wherever the Lord of the harvest honours any nation by the preaching of the gospel, he affords it a pledge and proof of his love; that there is no preacher of the words of everlasting life, who has not been raised up as an herald of peace by

the peculiar providence of the Father of all ; and that no doubt can be entertained of God visiting any nation in which the gospel is preached and declared." It would be waste of time to enter into a lengthened discussion concerning the lawful calling of any individual to fulfil the office of a preacher, since this subject is not here considered by Paul. Let us only keep this truth before our minds, that the gospel is not poured down upon us by mere chance from the clouds, but is introduced into every country by the hands of men, sent by a divine commission for the express purpose of dispelling the clouds of superstition, and breaking asunder the bonds of ignorance, error, and vice. *As it is written, How beautiful are the feet—*It suits the view of the apostle to quote, as illustrative of the subject under his consideration, Isaiah lii. 7, Nahum i. 15 ; where the Lord, intending to give the hope of deliverance from slavery to his people, adorns, with very striking praise, the arrival of the messengers who announce the glad tidings of emancipation, by which the yoke would be broken off, and the bonds burst asunder. Is the apostolic ministry of the gospel, therefore, by which the messenger brings the glad tidings of eternal life, to be held in less esteem than the announcer of deliverance from bondage ? Is not such a message from God, since there is nothing to be desired in this world, or worthy of our praise, which is not the gift of his bountiful hand ? Hence, also, we learn how much the preaching of the gospel is to be desired by all good men, and to be held in the highest esteem and regard, which is thus commended by the mouth of the Lord. The exalted praise bestowed by the Lord of glory on this divine treasure of such incomparable value, ought, without doubt, to rouse the minds of all men to an earnest and ardent desire

of their becoming possessed of such an unspeakable blessing. *Feet* means, by metonymy, the *arrival* of messengers.

*But they have not all obeyed the gospel*—This has no relation to the chain of reasoning pursued by Paul in this climax ; nor does he repeat it in the conclusion that follows ; but he introduces it as a necessary answer to the objection which his opponents might adduce from the apostle's statement, that the word always precedes faith in the order of divine dispensations, as the crop follows the sowing of the seed. Paul's opponents might adduce the argument as a mutual consequence from his reasoning, and infer that faith follows wherever the word of God exists, since, if this should be granted, Israel, which had never yet been deprived of the word of divine truth, would have sufficient cause for boasting. It was therefore necessary for Paul to show, by a passing hint, that many are called who are not chosen. The passage quoted by the apostle is taken from Isaiah liii. 1, (compare John xii. 38,) where the prophet, in his preface to that admirable prediction concerning the death and kingdom of Christ, expresses his astonishment and wonder with respect to the small number of believers, which appeared to his prophetic spirit to be so small, as to compel him to cry out, “Lord, who hath believed our report?” that is, our discourse which we preach. The Hebrew word used by the prophet on this occasion means *discourse* in a passive sense, and has been translated improperly, both by the Septuagint and the Vulgate, *report*, in a sense which can easily be understood. Paul introduced this quotation for the purpose of preventing his readers from imagining that faith necessarily followed the preaching of the word. The prophet afterwards assigns the reason why belief does not invariably follow the proclaim-

ing of the truth as it is in Jesus, when he adds, "To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For he means, "that success only attends the preached gospel when God shines into the heart by the light of his Holy Spirit, and by the internal calling, which is alone efficacious; and this peculiar gift, bestowed on the elect only, is thus distinguished from the external voice of the preacher." This clearly points out the folly of those reasoners who contend that all are indiscriminately chosen, because the doctrine of salvation is universal, and God invites all men to himself without distinction; for the general nature of the promises does not alone and merely of itself make salvation common to all, but the peculiar revelation mentioned by the prophet rather restricts and limits salvation to the elect.

*Therefore, faith cometh by hearing*—We see the object which the apostle had in view, when he formed the beautiful climax just finished, namely, to show "that wherever faith exists, the King of glory hath already afforded a sign of his election; that the Lord of Hosts has poured out his blessing by the ministry of the gospel, for the purpose of enlightening the minds of its hearers by faith, and of instructing them to call upon his name, in consequence of the loving-kindness of the Most High, by which salvation is promised to all. In this way also a clear proof is given that the gentiles are admitted by God to the participation of an eternal inheritance." This is a striking passage to show the efficacy of preaching, since it testifies that faith is produced by the proclamation of divine truth. It avails nothing, as the apostle has acknowledged, of itself; but the Lord, whenever it is his good pleasure to work, uses the preached word as an instrument of his power. Certain it is, that the human voice cannot, by its own power, penetrate the recesses of

the soul ; that too great honour would be bestowed on a mere mortal, if the power of regenerating us was said to be his gift ; and that the light of faith is of too sublime and elevated a nature to be conferred by man upon his fellow-beings. These remarks, however, do not prevent God from acting so efficaciously by the voice of man, as to create faith in us by means of the human ministry of the word of truth. Faith, also, it must be observed, rests on no other foundation than the doctrine of divine truth ; for Paul does not say that faith arises from any kind of doctrine, but he expressly limits it to the word of God ; and this restriction would be absurd if faith could rest on the opinions of men for its foundation. Away then with all mere human inventions, where the certainty of faith is considered. This also puts an end to the popish imagination of an implicit faith, which separates belief from the written word. Does not the blasphemous opinion merit execration, which is taught by the Roman Catholics, that faith in the words of infinite Wisdom continues suspended until it receives the support and sanction of the authority of the Church ?

18 But I say, Have they not heard ? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19 But I say, Did not Israel know ? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you. 20 But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not ; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. 21 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

*But, I say, Have they not heard?*—Since the minds of men are imbued by preaching with a knowledge of God, which of itself produces the invoking of the Lord of Glory, the question which remains to be discussed is,—“Whether the truth of God was not preached to the Gentiles?” for the Jews were much displeased with the novelty of Paul’s conduct, on account of his turning so suddenly to the heathens. Paul therefore proposes the question, Whether God had never before directed his voice to the gentiles, and performed the office of teacher to the whole world? For the purpose of showing that a common school was opened for all, where the Supreme Being might form disciples for himself from every part of the world, Paul quotes a passage from the Psalmist, (Psalm xix. 5,) which seems to have very little connexion with the subject under his consideration. The Psalmist is not speaking, in the quotation made by Paul, concerning apostles, but the silent works of God, in which he states the divine glory to be so manifestly declared, and set forth with such splendour, that they proclaim, in language of their own, the wonderful works and infinite power of the Creator of heaven and earth. Ancient interpreters, who have been also followed by the moderns, explained the whole nineteenth psalm, in consequence of this interpretation of Paul, in an allegorical sense. Without controversy, according to their commentaries, Christ was, like the sun, the bridegrom coming out of his chamber, and the apostles were the heavens. Interpreters of greater scrupulosity and modesty consider Paul to have transferred, by way of allusion to the apostles, what the Psalmist had in strict propriety confined to the creation of heaven. I cannot, however, believe that Paul had perverted this passage in such a manner, since I find the servants of the

Lord treating the Scriptures, on all occasions, with greater reverence, and not forcing them to bend, with too much freedom, merely to serve a purpose. I understand Paul to quote this passage according to the peculiar and genuine meaning of the Psalmist ; and the apostle reasons in the following manner :—

“ God hath displayed to the heathens, from the very commencement of the creation of the world, his own divinity ; and although he has not done this by the preaching of the sons of Adam, yet he has accomplished it by the testimony of the works of creation. For notwithstanding the gospel was then silent among the gentiles, yet the whole workmanship of heaven and earth declared his glory, and proclaimed the Supreme Being to be the Author and Creator of all things. It is evident, therefore, that the Lord, during the period when he confined the favour of his covenant to Israel, had not so fully withdrawn from the heathens a knowledge of himself, as to deprive them of every spark of divine light. He made, indeed, a clearer display of himself at that period to his elect people, who enjoyed all the freedom of intercourse with which domestic hearers are favoured ; and the Lord of glory instructed the Israelitish people with great familiarity from his sacred lips. He directed, however, at a distance, his instructions to the heathens by the voice of the heavens, and proved by this prelude his desire finally also to reveal himself to them in the gospel of eternal love.” I know no reason why the Septuagint have translated the Hebrew word, which means both a *line* in a building, and a *line* in writing, by a Greek expression that signifies *voice*. The repetition of the same idea in this beautiful psalm renders it, in my opinion, highly probable that the heavens are introduced by David as proclaiming aloud, both by writing and by speech, to the whole human race, in every

clime and every land, the irresistible power of Omnipotence. For the man after God's own heart instructs us by "their line and voice having gone out through all the earth, that the doctrine of the love and mercy of God is not confined to a few narrow corners and boundaries in this our world, but sounds aloud the grace of our heavenly Father to the most distant and remote regions of the globe."

*But, I say, Hath not Israel known?*—This objection of the opposite party is formed by instituting a comparison between the greater and less. Paul used the following reasoning :—" That the heathens ought not to be excluded from the knowledge of God, since the Creator of all things had, although in an obscure, hidden, and concealed manner, disclosed himself to the gentiles from the very beginning, or afforded them at least some taste of his truth. What then shall we say of Israel, which had been enlightened by a very different light of doctrine, and divine knowledge? Whence is it that foreigners and heathens hasten with so much speed to enjoy a light which they see held up to their view at so great a distance, while the holy descendants of Abraham entirely reject what they behold with so much nearness, and such great familiarity?" We must never forget the following distinction pointed out by Moses, Deut. iv. 8 :—" For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" Why then did not Israel acknowledge and follow the doctrine of the law in which it had been instructed? *First, Moses saith*—Paul adduces the testimony of Moses to prove that there was no absurdity in God preferring the heathens to the Jews. The passage is taken from Moses' celebrated song, (Deut. xxxii. 25,) where God upbraids the Jews on account of their perfidious conduct, and threatens to inflict severe

punishment upon them, and to move them to jealousy by making the gentiles partakers of the covenant, because the Jews had forsaken the Rock that begat them, and bowed down before false gods. " You have despised and rejected me, says the Lord of Hosts, and transferred my dominion and honour to idols. To avenge this injury you have shown me, I will in turn substitute the gentiles in your stead, and bestow on them what I have hitherto conferred on you as a blessing." This could not be carried into effect without rejecting the people of Israel ; for the King of glory displayed his jealousy mentioned by Moses, by appointing for himself a nation from those which were not a people, and by raising up from nothing a new people to take possession of the place from which the Jews had been expelled, since they had forsaken the God of salvation, and devoted themselves to idols. It forms no excuse for the Jews that they had not revolted on the advent of the Messiah to gross, external idolatry, since they had profaned the whole worship of God by their inventions ; nay, denied at last God the Father, revealed to them in his only begotten Son, Christ Jesus ; which is the very highest kind of impiety. The expressions, *a foolish nation*, and *no nation*, imply the same meaning ; for, properly speaking, man, who is devoid of the hope of heavenly life, wants the essence of man. The beginning also, and origin of life, spring from the light of faith : spiritual essence, therefore, flows from the new creation ; and in this sense Paul calls believers the work of God, by which the Spirit regenerates them, and transforms them into his image. From the name *folly* we infer, that all the wisdom men enjoy, without the Word of God, is mere vanity and folly.

*But Isaiah is very bold, and saith—Since this prophecy is more plain and distinct, Paul excites*

greater attention by speaking in the preface of Isaiah as writing with boldness : the following is the sense of the passage :—“ The prophet has not written in a figurative or doubtful style, but has asserted, in plain and clear language, the calling of the gentiles.” Paul has separated, by a few intervening words, what occurs in Isaiah without any interruption, (Isaiah lxv. 1, 2,) where the Lord says the time would come when he would turn and show his grace to the gentiles ; and he immediately subjoins, as a reason, his being wearied with the rebellious obstinacy of Israel, which had become, in consequence of its too long continuance, altogether intolerable. The prophet thus writes : “ I am sought of them that asked not for me. I am found of them that sought me not. I said, behold me—behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.” Isaiah uses the past tense instead of the future, to point out the certainty of the event. I know some Rabbins pervert the meaning of this entire passage, as if God promised to grant the Jews repentance from their revolt. No doubt can be entertained of the prophet directing his address to strangers, for the context is confined “ to a people that was not called by his name.” Isaiah therefore foretells, without doubt, that such as had formerly been strangers to the God of Hosts would be received into his family by a new adoption. The calling, therefore, of the gentiles shines forth with great splendour, as the general type of the calling of all believing children of the Fountain of love ; for no child of Adam can anticipate the love of infinite Mercy ; but we are all without exception snatched and delivered from the very depths of the abyss of death, by his gratuitous kindness and clemency. No knowledge of the King of glory,—no zeal or ardour for his worship,—no sense, feeling, or judgment of his truth, on the part

of man, contribute in any measure to usher in the kingdom of divine grace in the soul. It springs from the tender mercies of Jehovah alone.

*But of Israel he saith*—The prophet assigns the reason why the Supreme Being goes to the gentiles, namely, the contempt with which the Jews treated his grace. Paul at the same time expressly states that God has reproved his elect people on account of their wickedness, and thus points out the blindness and hardness of heart of the Israelites. Paul has made a slight deviation from the Hebrew, by substituting one particle for another, according to the phraseology of that language. The Giver of all good says, that he stretched forth his hands to Israel, which he never ceased to invite to himself by his holy word, and to allure by every kind of tenderness and love. These are the true methods by which God calls man to himself, since he thus affords them the surest marks and proofs of his benevolence. Unerring Truth complains in this passage of the contempt shown to his doctrine, which was rendered more detestable by the fatherly solicitude with which he invited the sons of men to become partakers of his loving-kindness. The expression, *stretcheth forth his hands*, is very emphatic, reminding us of the love of a kind parent, stretching forth his arms to receive a returning prodigal into his bosom, and sending the ministers of the gospel to procure the conversion of repenting sinners. *All day long*, or *daily*, removes all cause for wondering that the God of all long-suffering should at last be worn out in doing the Jews acts of goodness, since his unceasing labours were despised and neglected. Jeremiah uses the same figure of speech, (Jer. vii. 13 ; xi. 7,) when he says he rose up early and spoke unto the Jews. Their unbelief is pointed out by two very appropriate expressions, rebellion and obstinate con-

tradiction. The original may be translated *stubborn*, or *rebellious*, or according to Erasmus and the Vulgate, *unbelieving* and *disobedient*. Since, however, Isaiah accuses the Jews of obstinacy, adding, that “they walked in ways that were not good,” I feel assured, that the two expressions in the Septuagint, *stubborn* or *rebellious*, and *gainsaying*, were used to convey what they considered the full force of the Hebrew idiom, because the Israelites displayed their obstinacy in rejecting, with obdurate scorn, the holy admonitions and instructions of the prophets, and at the same time exhibited pride the most unsubdued, and bitterness of spirit the most relentless, when they renounced the counsels of the Most High.

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## CHAPTER XI.

1 I SAY then, Hath God cast away his people ? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias ? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars ; and I am left alone, and they seek my life ? 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him ? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal*. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then *is it* no more of

works ; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work.

*I say then*—The tendency of St. Paul's former dissertation concerning the blindness and obstinacy of the Jews might appear to lead to the conviction, that Christ, by his advent, had removed the promises of the almighty God from the Jews, deprived of all hope of salvation, to other nations. The apostle here anticipates the objection, and so moderates his former observations concerning the rejection of the Jews, that none of his readers can imagine the covenant formerly entered into with Abraham had been now abrogated. Paul flatly denies the opinion, and afterwards clearly proves its falsehood, that the alone deliverer of his people had so completely forgotten his covenant, that the Jews were now entirely estranged from the kingdom of God, as the heathens had been before the coming of Christ. Nor does the question turn on this point, whether God has justly rejected his people, or without desert, cause, or default. For the apostle has proved, in the last chapter, that the rejection of God's righteousness, from a preposterous zeal, by the Jewish people, had been visited with a just punishment on account of their pride, had met with a merited blindness, and the Israelites were thus finally deprived of the covenant. The question in dispute is not the cause of God's casting off the Israelites, but whether the covenant formerly entered into by the Judge of all the world with the patriarchs had been abolished, although the Jews had deservedly merited the divine vengeance in their rejection. There can be no greater absurdity than to imagine any perfidious conduct on the part of man can weaken the covenant

of God, since, according to the principle universally maintained by Paul, adoption is gratuitous, and founded on God alone, not man; and, on this account, it must remain firm and inviolable, although the most impious unbelief of the whole human race should conspire to abolish and overthrow this fatherly love of the Most High. The following difficulty is to be solved, and objection answered, that the truth and the election of a merciful Father is not to be believed to depend on the dignity of the human race. *For I am an Israelite*—Before entering upon the subject to be discussed, he incidentally proves, by his own example, how absurd it is to imagine the Jewish nation to be forsaken of the Fountain of all justice. Paul himself was an Israelite, descended from the most remote posterity, not a proselyte, or recently engrafted into the civil government and policy of Israel. Since, therefore, he justly deserved to be reckoned among the most chosen of God's servants, he afforded a decided proof that the grace of God rested and abode in Israel. The apostle assumes, therefore, the proposition, that God's covenant with Abraham's seed is not abolished as proved, which he will, however, afterwards explain and handle in a more complete manner. By calling himself of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, as well as by assuming the title of an Israelite, he intends to establish his claim to the character of a genuine descendant from the father of believers, as in Phil. iii. 4. For the interpretation adopted by some commentators, that Paul was descended from the tribe of Benjamin, which had nearly been exterminated, as affording a strong recommendation of the mercy of the divine Protector, seems forced and far-fetched.

*God hath not cast away*—The answer is negative and moderate, for, had the apostle given a flat denial

to the rejection of the Jews, he would have contradicted himself. By adopting this correction, he shows the casting off of the Jews to be of such a character as not to invalidate the promise of the Fountain of all goodness. The answer is divided into two parts; first, that the almighty and everlasting Father has by no means cast off, contrary to the fidelity of his covenant, the whole offspring of Abraham; for the effect of adoption does not indeed exist in all the sons of the patriarch by carnal descent, because, in the second place, the secret election of the Giver of all grace precedes adoption. Thus the general rejection of the Israelites could not prevent the continuance of the salvation of some of the seed of Abraham; for the visible body itself of the Jewish people had been so rejected that no member of the spiritual body of Christ could fail or be destroyed. Should any of my readers propose the question, whether circumcision were in such a manner a common symbol and sign of the grace of God to all the Jews, that they deserved to be reckoned among the people who alone enjoyed the glory and hope of his children, I return an immediate answer, that the external call is, of itself, altogether ineffectual without faith; and this honour, if rejected on being offered, is deservedly taken from unbelievers. A special and peculiar people in this way always continues to exist, in whom God exhibits a mark and proof of his own constancy; and Paul derives the origin of this unchanging firmness from the secret election of a propitious and reconciled God. For the Lord, to whom all honour and glory belong, is not here said to have respect to faith, but to continue firm to his purpose in not casting away the people whom he hath foreknown. I must here again repeat a former observation, that foreknowledge does not mean a certain speculative view, by

which the uncreated Cause of all effects foresaw the character of every individual of the human family, but points to the good pleasure of the decree of the sovereign Disposer of all events, by which he hath chosen for his children those who were not yet born, and had no power to insinuate themselves into the favour of the Author of all happiness. Thus, (Gal. iv. 9,) Paul says, they are known of God, because he prevents them by his grace and favour, and calls them to a knowledge of Christ. We now clearly understand, that although the universal calling of the Most High may not be productive of any fruit, yet the fidelity of our everlasting Father continues unchanged, for he always preserves his church, while the elect remain. The Head of the church, notwithstanding he invites all people in common, and without consideration, to himself, yet he does not internally draw any except those, who are known by infinite Wisdom to be his own, and who are given by the Father to the Son. The Lord, full of sweetness and benignity, will continue the faithful guard and guardian of his own to the very end.

*Wot ye not*—Since the number of believers in Christ was so very few among the Jewish people, they would necessarily conclude from this circumstance, that the whole race of Abraham was rejected, and the thought would steal across their minds, that no sign and symbol of divine grace existed in such a scene of ruin, desolation, and deformity. For, since adoption was the sacred bond, by which the sons of Abraham were kept collected under the faith of the Sovereign of the universe, it was altogether improbable that the Jewish people would be dispersed and scattered in so miserable and unhappy a manner, provided the fatherly love of the God of the patriarchs had not been withdrawn from the support and blessing of their descendants. Paul re-

moves this stumbling-block by quoting the very appropriate example of Elias, during whose restoration of the law so dreadful a desolation is reported to have taken place in the number of believers, that no appearance of the church of God remained, and every vestige of divine grace seemed to be obliterated: still, however, the church of the great Ruler and Preserver of the world was wonderfully saved, as if it had been concealed in the safeguard of a tomb. It is the height of folly, therefore, to ascertain the number of the church by means of our senses and judgment. If, indeed, this distinguished prophet, so strikingly endowed with the abundant light of the Spirit of holiness, of consolation, and of truth, when desirous to reckon the number of God's people by his own judgment, laboured under such a deception, what may we not expect to be our lot, whose keenest perspicacity is dulness itself, when compared with the knowledge of this servant of the Most High? Let us, therefore, draw no rash conclusion on this subject, but let this remain fixed in our hearts—that the church, which appears to our eyes nothing, is cherished and preserved by the secret providence of the alone Refuge of the afflicted. Never let us forget the folly and pride of those, who determine the number of the elect by the measure of their own sense and judgment. For the Protector and Comforter of his people can, by means attended with no difficulty on his part, and wholly concealed from our view, preserve his elect in a surprising manner, when all seems involved in one common ruin. We are desirous to impress upon the attention of our readers, that no event has befallen us, which was not experienced by the holy patriarchs of old, and this consideration has a powerful effect in confirming our faith; hence Paul, both in this and other parts of his epistles, carefully compares the

state of his own time with the ancient condition of the church. Such a plan prevents us from looking on any change with novelty, and we know how weak and unprepared minds are distressed by any new event. The phrase, *in Elijah*, means, in the history or transactions of this prophet; but I think Paul adopted an Hebraism in this passage, for the Hebrew particle, corresponding to the Greek, frequently signifies *of* or *concerning* Elias.

*How he maketh intercession to God against Israel—* Elijah proves his great affection for the Lord by not hesitating to become opposed to his nation on account of the glory of his everlasting Shepherd, and to pray for its destruction, because he considered the religion and worship of God had been lost among the Israelites. The error of the prophet consisted in condemning the whole nation, himself only excepted, as guilty of impiety, and in praying for its severe punishment at the hand of the Lord. The 1 Kings xix. 10, cited by Paul, contains no imprecation, but a mere complaint. Since, however, his complaint implies a total despair of the religion of the whole Jewish nation, we may rest assured that he devoted it to destruction. Elijah proclaimed the spread of impiety to be so extensive over all Judea, as to have taken possession of all its borders, since he thought no worshipper of the God of heaven and earth remained but himself.

*I have reserved to myself seven thousand—* The Lord intended, by using a definite for an indefinite number, to point out the great multitude which undoubtedly worshipped Jehovah. Since, therefore, the grace of God has so extensive an influence, even during periods of the most deplorable impiety, it is our bounden duty not to judge all those to be votaries of Satan, whose piety does not openly manifest itself to our view. Let the following truth take full pos-

session of our mind—"Though impiety abounds in every part of the world, and the horrors of a religious and moral confusion are every where displayed, yet the salvation of many continues shut up and secured under the seal of the alone Founder of the church." But to prevent any one from making this a pretext for the indulging in sloth, as the generality of professors seek a hiding-place for their vices under the secret protection and guard of the Rock of Ages, it is our duty to make the following observation, that salvation is secured only for the steady votaries of the faith of God, who exhibit integrity of conduct, and freedom from pollution and sin. The circumstance also connected with the judgment of the Lord must be carefully attended to, that those finally continue firm and secure, who have not by any external bowing of the knee prostituted their body to the worship of idols. The affections of these worshippers were not only preserved from impurity, but their bodies were untainted by the least uncleanness and superstition.

*Even so then at this present time also*—Paul applies the example to his own period, and for the purpose of establishing the similitude in its various parts, calls them *a remnant*, when compared with the great number of impious characters, whose vices were daily in view. The apostle, at the same time, alludes to the prophecy of Isaiah, already quoted, and shows that the faith of God continues to shine forth in the midst of the melancholy and confused desolation of the people of the Most High, since a certain remnant still continues to exist. To confirm this with greater certainty, he expressly calls those, who continued believers by the grace of God, *a remnant*, that afforded an undoubted evidence of the unchangeable election of Infinite Wisdom. In the same way, also, the Lord said to Elijah, when the

whole Jewish people had revolted to idolatry, that he had preserved seven thousand, and hence the conclusion necessarily follows, that the kindness and love of our eternal Father and Saviour had rescued them from the jaws of destruction. Paul does not here speak simply of grace, but he recalls us to election, that we may learn to rely and depend with reverence on the secret counsel and decree of God. One of the propositions, here stated by the apostle, is "the small number who are saved, when contrasted with the great multitude of those who take to themselves the name of the people of the Most High." The other proposition is, "that the elect are saved by the power of the Giver of all grace, without any claim to merit on their parts." The *election of grace* is a Hebraism, and means gratuitous election.

*And if by grace, then is it no more of works*—The amplification is derived from comparing opposite subjects, for the grace of God and the merit of works are so contrasted with each other, that the establishment of one of these is the subversion of the other. If, also, no consideration of works can be admitted without obscuring the gratuitous goodness of Eternal Wisdom, which Paul is so very desirous to commend in election, what answer will those fanatics be able to give our apostle, who make the cause of election to consist in that dignity which the Allwise foresees to exist in the descendants of Adam? For, whether past or future works are considered, this opinion of Paul will always militate against the doctrine of foreseen works, as determining the Cause of all things to elect his people, since the apostle says that grace leaves no room for works. Paul is not here disputing only concerning our reconciliation with God, nor the intermediate or proximate causes of our salvation, but he ascends still higher, and considers why the Lord, to

whom all praise and glory belong, has chosen some before the foundation of the world, and passed by others. He asserts that God is induced to make this distinction between the children of Adam from no other cause than his own mere good will and pleasure; for Paul contends that every concession made to works detracts so much from grace. It hence follows, that it is absurd and ridiculous to mingle up the foreknowledge of works with election. For the reward of works is already established, if God elects some, and reprobates others, according to his foreknowledge of their being worthy or unworthy of salvation; and the grace of God will not have entire dominion and rule, but will only be considered to have a half-share in the cause of election. For, as Paul, in his former dissertation concerning the justification of Abraham, says, the reward to him that worketh is not reckoned of grace but of debt, so he now derives his argument from the same source, "If works be taken into consideration, where God adopts a certain number of men to salvation, a reward can be claimed as due to their good actions, and gratuitous kindness is subverted." Although, indeed, Paul is here discoursing concerning election, yet, because the reasoning adduced by him is general, it ought to be extended to the whole chain of argumentation used in considering our salvation. The following truth must be acknowledged and felt: "That so often as our salvation is attributed to the grace of our heavenly Father, the Author of all happiness, the merits of works must be entirely renounced, and we must believe the righteousness of works to be completely annihilated whenever the name of grace is taken into our lips."

7 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained

it, and the rest were blinded. 8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day. 9 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 10 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

*What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for*—Because the subject here discussed was difficult, Paul proposes a question, as if he was perplexed by doubt. He was, however, desirous to give greater certainty to the following answer by the very doubt he proposes. Paul intimates that no other reason can be given than the vain labour of the Jews in seeking for salvation, because they struggled with a preposterous zeal. Notwithstanding he here makes no mention of the cause, yet he was desirous it should be understood, since he had expressly given a statement of it in a former passage. His expressions convey the following sense: “We need not be surprised to find Israel accomplishing nothing by her struggles after righteousness;” and he then subjoins his declaration concerning election. For if Israel has deservedly obtained nothing, what have others acquired, whose case or condition was not superior? Who cannot see that election alone maketh all the distinction? But the signification of this word is doubtful. Some consider it to be taken collectively for the elect themselves, that the parts of the antithesis may correspond to each other; nor do I disapproye of this opinion, provided, at the same time, they grant me that the word *election* implies more than *elect*, intimating this to have been the alone cause of our enjoying divine mercy: as if Paul had said,

“ Those who rely on merits have not obtained, but such as depend for salvation on the gratuitous election of God ;” for he here institutes a direct comparison between the whole body of the Israelitish people and the remnant whose salvation was secured by the grace of God. It hence follows, that the cause of salvation does not reside in men, but depends on the mere good pleasure and will of God. *And the rest were blinded*—“ As the elect alone are freed from destruction by the grace of God, so all, who are not elected, must necessarily remain in blindness.” For Paul, when he considers the reprobates, makes the beginning of their ruin and condemnation to arise from their being forsaken of the Lord. All his proofs, which are collected rather from various parts of the Scriptures than taken from any one writer, seem to be foreign to the design of Paul, if more carefully examined according to the circumstances of the passages adduced. Blindness and hardness of heart are stated in all the apostle’s quotations to be, as it were, the scourges of God inflicted upon the wicked, as punishments of their crimes already committed. But Paul was desirous to prove in this passage that such as have been reprobated by God before the creation of the world are *blinded*, and not those who have already merited such a punishment by their own wickedness. This difficulty admits the following brief solution,—that the perverseness of our nature, when forsaken of Infinite Holiness, is the source and origin of the impiety which provokes the indignation of God to inflict punishment in so striking a manner. Paul’s quotations, therefore, were not irrelevant to the subject under consideration, namely, eternal reprobation, since it is the spring and origin of those awful manifestations of divine judgment mentioned by Isaiah and David, as the tree produces the fruit, and the fountain is the source and spring of

the river. The wicked, indeed, on account of their crimes, are punished with blindness by the just and merited judgment of God ; but if we inquire into the fountain and origin of their ruin, we shall come to this conclusion, that, since they are cursed of God, they can draw down, and heap upon their own heads, by all their deeds, sayings, and counsels, nothing but a curse.\* Nay, the cause of eternal reprobation is

\* Men which were reprobated were offered unto God in a mass of perdition, and utterly corrupted ; for God decreed to produce them, not elsewhere, but out of the seed of Adam. And, forasmuch as by his free purpose he would not bestow his mercy on many, which is utterly to refuse, thereof followed rejection, whereby they were left in their native sin. Farther, forsoomuch as God suffereth not his creatures to be idle, they also are perpetually pricked forward to work ; and, for that they were not healed, they do all things according to their corrupt nature ; which, although they seem sometimes to be beautiful works, yet before God they are sins. Moreover, according as their wicked facts deserve, God many times punisheth in them sins by other sins ; as in the Romans, “many are said to have been delivered up unto a reprobate mind, for that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God.” (Rom. i. 24, 26.)

God oftentimes, (Isa. vi. 10,) either by himself or by evil angels, sendeth cogitations, and offereth occasions which, if if we were upright, might be taken in the best part ; but, forasmuch as we are not renewed, we are by them driven unto evil ; afterwards justly and worthily followeth damnation for sinners ; and, finally, the declaration of the power and justice of God is the last effect of reprobation, and all these things follow reprobation. God useth sins, which are continually committed, to those ends which he himself hath appointed. And, forsoomuch as this is not done of him rashly, but by his determinate counsel, how can it be that, after a sort, sins are not comprehended under reprobation ?

God doth not properly stir up men unto sin ; but yet he useth the sins of wicked men, and also guideth them, lest they should pass beyond their bounds : for God dealeth not alone, but wicked men and the devil also do use their naughty endeavour in working. But when we say that the act itself (which afterward, through our own fault, is evil) is brought

so hidden, that we can do nothing else but admire the incomprehensible counsel and purpose of God, as the last clause of this chapter proves. There is great folly in the conduct of such as endeavour to conceal this first cause, which is hidden from our sense and judgment, under the veil and pretext of near and most manifest causes, whenever allusion is made to them in conversation. This implies that God had not freely determined and surely purposed concerning the whole human race before Adam's fall according to the good pleasure of his will ; for, in the first place, he condemns the vicious and depraved seed of our first parent, and, in the second, recompenses in a peculiar manner, according to their deserts, the crimes of every individual.

forth by the chiefest good, that is, by God, and by us, that is by our will, how shall we understand this ? Whether does God do it wholly, or we wholly ? Or, whether it be partly from Him, and partly from us ? And here we draw this producement to the very act of our will. We answer, If consideration of the whole be referred unto the cause, we must speak after one sort ; if it be referred unto the effect, after another sort. If the whole be referred to the cause, so that we understand our will to be the whole cause of the action, that it be able by itself to work without God, it is not true ; for unless God would assent thereunto, it should not be able to bring forth action. So God, although by his absolute power he might perform the work itself by himself, yet, as the course of things is, he will not deal alone, but will have the creature to be a doer together with him ; by this means are neither the will nor yet God said to be the whole cause. But, if it be referred to the effect itself, God and the will are the full cause ; for God and the will make the whole effect, although they be joined together in action. I will show the thing by an example : for bringing forth of an action, we have a will and an understanding, and our will maketh the whole effect, and our understanding is the cause of the whole effect ; but the one is nigh, the other farther off. And so it is of the will and of God ; the will doth all, and God doth all ; but one is the first cause, and the other is the second.—*Peter Martyr's Common Places.*

*God hath given to them a spirit*—Paul, I doubt not, cited Isa. vi. 9 as it is in Matt. xiii. 14; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; and Luke (Acts xxviii. 26) says our apostle quoted it to the Jews at Rome, but not precisely in the same words. Nor does the apostle use the very language of the prophet, but deduces only the following opinion, “that God hath given them a spirit of bitterness and maliciousness, so that they continue overwhelmed in a stupid slumbering state, having eyes they see not, and ears they hear not.” The prophet is commanded to harden the heart of the people of Israel; but Paul penetrates the fountain itself, because a brutish stupidity occupies all the senses, when men are so given up to this state of madness and folly, as to provoke and whet themselves against the truth by virulent incentives. For Paul does not only denominate it a spirit of giddiness and dimness, but of remorse and pricking of conscience, where, indeed, the very bitterness of gall displays itself, nay, even madness in rejecting the truth. He pronounces the reprobates to be so maddened by the secret judgment of God, that, lost in stupefaction and amazement, they can form no correct judgment of any kind. For by the expression, *seeing they see not*, is implied the dulness and obtuseness of all their senses. The addition, *until this day*, is Paul's, to prevent any objector from stating that the prophecy had been formerly fulfilled, and was therefore improperly applied to the period of preaching the gospel of Christ; since the apostle hints that the blindness described by the prophet did not continue merely for a day, but had remained unchanged with the incurable obstinacy of the Jews until the advent of the Messiah.

*And David saith*—The words are a little changed in this quotation from the Psalmist, but without any violation of the sense. “Let their table become a

snare before them ; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap." No mention is made of recompense in David, but there is a general agreement in the whole passage between him and the apostle. The Psalmist curses the wicked, and wishes that every source of their happiness, and object of their desire, which he means by *table* and *their welfare*, may prove their ruin and destruction. He then devotes them to blindness of spirit, and prostration of strength, and points out the first by blindness of their eyes, and the last by the bending of their back. We need not be surprised on finding the denunciations and imprecations of David to be extended to the whole nation of the Jews, for it is well known that many of the nobility, and the great body of the people, were opposed to the Psalmist. When we consider David was a type of Christ, it is easy to transfer the denunciations pronounced by the king of the Jews against his enemies, to the Antitype, Christ Jesus, whose enemies imprecated curses even upon themselves, "Let his blood be upon us and our children." Since, therefore, this curse awaits all the enemies of the Messiah, that their very food is converted into poison, and the gospel is to them an odour of death unto death, let us embrace the grace of God with humility and trembling. Since David speaks of the Israelites, in this psalm, who were descended from Abraham according to the flesh, and possessed at that period the chief pre-eminence in the kingdom, Paul very properly applies this testimony of the sweet singer of Israel to the Jews of his own time, that the blindness of a large portion of the lineal descendants of Abraham, when the apostle lived, might neither appear a new nor uncommon event.

11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall ? God forbid : but rather through their

fall salvation *is come* unto the gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. 12 Now, if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the gentiles; how much more their fulness? 13 For I speak to you gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. 15 For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them be*, but life from the dead?

*I say then, have they stumbled*—You will be much entangled in this dispute, unless you attentively consider that the apostle is speaking at one time concerning the whole nation of the Jews, and at another concerning individuals. Hence arises the great difference of his statements, and the reason why he sometimes says the Jews have been exterminated from the kingdom of God, cut off from the tree, and hurried to destruction by God's judgment; and again, on other occasions, he denies that they have fallen from grace, nay, asserts, they rather remain in possession of the covenant, and have a place in **the** church of God. Paul now speaks with this distinction in his view; for since a great number of the Jews were opposed to Christ, so that the whole nation was almost seized with this perverse feeling, and very few among them exhibited any marks of sound understanding, Paul proposes the question,—Whether the Jewish nation had so stumbled against the Rock Christ, that its complete ruin was inevitable, and no hope remained of repentance? He here justly asserts that there was no cause to despair

of the salvation of the Israelites, or that they were so rejected by God that their restoration was impossible, or that the covenant of grace, which God had once entered into with them, was completely extinguished, since the seed of blessing still remained in the nation. It is evident this sense must be annexed to the language of the apostle, because in a former passage he joined certain ruin with the blindness of the Jews, while he here gives them hopes of their rising again, and these two propositions are directly opposed to each other. Such as have obstinately stumbled against Christ have fallen, and sunk down into perdition ; but the nation itself hath not so fallen, as necessarily to involve the ruin or estrangement from God of every descendant of the father of the faithful. *But through their fall salvation is come unto the gentiles*—The apostle distinctly states, in this passage, that the fall of the Jews had contributed to promote the salvation of the gentiles, for the purpose of exciting the Israelites to jealousy, and thus leading them to think of repentance. Paul evidently directed his attention to the above-cited testimony of Moses, when the Lord threatens Israel that as God had provoked him to emulation by false gods, so by the law of retaliation he will provoke the Jews by a foolish nation. The word here used implies the affection of emulation and jealousy, when we are roused in our feelings on seeing another preferred to us. If therefore the design of the Lord is to provoke Israel to emulation, she did not fall for the purpose of being plunged into eternal ruin, but that the divine blessing, which was despised by the Jews, might be bestowed upon the gentiles, and thus Abraham's posterity might at last be roused to seek the Lord from whom it had revolted. Our readers need not very much perplex themselves in making any application of the testimony adduced by Paul,

for he does not urge the peculiar sense of the word, but uses it only in a vulgar and usual manner. For as emulation rouses a wife, who has been rejected by her husband on account of her own fault, to display an earnest zeal to be reconciled to him, so it is possible, according to the apostle, that the Jews, on seeing the gentiles adopted in their place, may be touched with a feeling of their rejection, and aspire to regain reconciliation with the God of Israel.

*But if their fall*—Since Paul had taught that the gentiles had entered into the situation formerly occupied by the Jews, after the last had been rejected, that he might not render the salvation of the Jews odious to the gentiles, as if the destruction of the former constituted the salvation of the latter, he opposes this false opinion, and adopts the contrary sentiment, that nothing could contribute more to the promotion of the salvation of the gentiles, than the flourishing and vigorous state of the grace of God among the Jews. To establish his proof he uses an argument from the less to the greater. If the fall of the Jews could rouse the gentiles, and the diminishing, decay, and loss of the former, be the cause of enriching the latter, how much more would the fulness of the descendants of Abraham add to the wealth of the heathen ? for the former is a state contrary to nature, and the latter agreeable to its laws. Nor is the cogency of this reasoning weakened, because the word of God was dispersed and spread abroad among the heathens, after the Jews had scornfully rejected and cast it from them with contempt and loathing ; for had the Jews received the word of God, their faith would have been productive of much more fruit than was occasioned in the present instance by their unbelief ; for the truth of God would have received a greater confirmation by its fulfilment being manifested in the Jews, and they

would have made many disciples by teaching the doctrine of Christ, who had been turned away from the cross by the obstinacy of the posterity of Abraham. The antithetic character of the sentence would have been better preserved, and more adapted to the subject under consideration, if the fall of the Jews had been opposed to the provoking, stirring, and raising up of the gentiles. I give this admonition with a view to prevent my readers from expecting, in this passage, all the ornaments of elocution, and to secure them from feeling any disgust on account of Paul's ignorance of oratory. Paul's writings are intended to form the breast, heart, and affections to piety, peace, truth, and virtue ; not the tongue to the fascinating arts of eloquence.

*For I speak to you, gentiles*—Paul confirms his opinion, by the strongest reasoning, that the gentiles are deprived of nothing, if the Jews again return into favour with the great Deliverer from the captivity of sin ; for he shows the salvation of the Jews and gentiles to be so closely connected together, that the same means contribute to promote the advancement of both. He addresses the gentiles in the following manner :—“ Since I am peculiarly appointed an apostle to you ; and on this account it is my duty to procure, with a peculiar zeal and study, your salvation, which is committed to my care, and omitting, as it were, every other pursuit, should devote myself to this one great object, I shall continue to perform my duty with fidelity, if I shall gain any of my own nation to become the disciples of the Lord Jesus, and this will redound to the glory of my ministry, and your own spiritual welfare.” For whatever conduced to add to the honour of Paul's ministry, was useful in promoting the salvation of the gentiles ; and this was the end and design of all his labours. The apostle uses the

word, *to provoke them to jealousy*, in this passage, that the gentiles may desire the fulfilment of the prophecy described, (Deut. xxxii. 21,) “ I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation,” when they fully understand its usefulness in contributing to their own salvation.

*Might save some of them*—Observe, from this passage, how a minister of the word of truth may be said to save, in his own way and manner, those who are brought by him to the obedience of faith ; for we ought, as the stewards of God's mysteries, so to conduct the dispensation of salvation to our people, as to know that all the virtue and efficacy of it is in the power of God, and thus bestow on him the praise he deserves. We must always keep in mind, that the preaching of the gospel is the instrument by which the salvation of believers can be procured ; and notwithstanding it can avail nothing without the Spirit of the Author of all happiness, yet its energy is exerted with very powerful effect when the internal influences of the Holy Ghost act with might and vigour.

*For if the casting away*—Many consider this to be an obscure passage, and some interpreters give it a very improper construction ; yet it ought, in my opinion, to be regarded as affording another argument, derived from the comparing of the less with the greater, in the following manner :—“ If the rejection of the Jews could be attended with so powerful an effect, as to occasion the reconciling of the gentiles, how much more efficacious will the receiving of the Jews be ? May it not justly be considered a resurrection from the dead ? for Paul invariably insists on this truth, that the gentiles have no cause for envy, as if their own condition would be rendered worse by the Jews being received into

favour ; for since the Father of mercy has, in a wonderful manner, brought light out of darkness, and life from death, we have much greater cause to expect, according to Paul's reasoning, that the resurrection of a people already dead will quicken the gentiles. Reconciliation does not differ, as some object, from resurrection, and we understand resurrection to mean, in the present instance, that grace, by which we are transferred from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life : for though the subject-matter treated of by these different words, be the same, yet they do not convey the very same sense and force in their original meaning, and this affords sufficient cogency and strength to the argument.

16 For if the first-fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy* ; and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree ; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well ; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear : 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

*For if the first fruit be holy*—By comparing the dignity of the Jews and gentiles, he deprives the latter of all cause for pride, and allays the indignation of the former to the utmost of his power : for

he shows that the gentiles are so far from excelling the Jews in any respect, if they merely allege nothing, save their own prerogative, for securing honour, that they would be left very far behind, should they enter fairly into the contest. We ought never to forget, that in this comparison nation is contrasted with nation, not man with man. They will be found equal in this mutual comparison, because they are both the sons of Adam : the only dissimilitude between the two arises from the Jews being separated from the gentiles, that they might become a peculiar people to the Lord. They were sanctified, therefore, by a holy covenant, and honoured by a peculiar nobility, which God did not at that time deign to bestow upon the gentiles ; and, because the powerful character of the covenant appeared to be much diminished at that period, he orders us to direct our attention to Abraham and the patriarchs, with whom the blessing of God was neither vain nor inefficacious. He infers, therefore, that an hereditary holiness had passed over from the patriarchs to all their posterity ; nor would this conclusion have been valid, had the apostle treated only of persons, without paying regard, in an especial manner, to the promise : for a father, because he is just, does not immediately transfer his integrity to his son ; but the Lord sanctified the father of the faithful to himself on this very condition, that his seed should likewise be holy ; and the God of love therefore bestowed holiness, not only upon the person of Abraham, but the whole of his kindred and offspring ; and on this account the argument of the apostle is conclusive, that all the Jews are sanctified in their father. He also confirms this by adducing two comparisons ; the former he takes from the ceremonies of the law, and nature supplies him with the other : for the first fruits that were offered sanctified

the whole lump, and in the same manner the goodness of the juice is diffused from the root to the branches, and the same relationship exists between the posterity and their original parents, as between the first fruits of the whole mass which is sanctified, and between the branches and the root. It is not surprising, therefore, if the Jews are sanctified in their father. All difficulty is removed by understanding holiness to mean nothing else but the spiritual nobility of the race of Abraham, which was not indeed peculiar to their nature, but flowed to them from the covenant. The hereditary adoption of the Jews, I confess, justly entitles them to be regarded as naturally holy; but I am now speaking of our first nature from Adam, and according to this acceptation of the term, we are all cursed in our original parent. The dignity, therefore, of an elect people, in the proper acceptation of the term, is a supernatural privilege.

*And if some of the branches be broken off*—He now touches upon the present dignity of the heathens, which exactly resembles the future honour of branches, that, being taken from another stock, are inserted into some distinguished tree. The heathens sprang, as it were, from a wild, unfruitful olive-tree, since they found nothing except a curse in their whole race. All their glory, therefore, arises from their new ingrafting, not their old stock; and the gentiles have no cause for glorying over the Jews on account of any honour which they may possess. Paul also prudently diminishes the harshness of his expression, by saying certain branches were broken off, not the whole surface of the tree cut away. God, also, in the same manner, took some from different parts among the gentiles, and ingrafted them into a sacred and blessed trunk.

*But if thou boastest, thou bearest not the root—*

The gentiles cannot dispute with the Jews concerning the excellence of their race, without entering into a controversy with Abraham himself, which would have been too base, since he resembles the root by which they are carried, and become lively and vigorous. It would be as absurd for the gentiles to boast against the Jews, as for the branches to be high-minded against the root. This is true, when the excellence of the race of the Jews is taken into consideration, for Paul always wishes us to direct our attention to the beginning of our salvation ; for we know, after Christ's advent, the wall of separation was destroyed, and the whole world was sprinkled with the grace which God had before deposited with his own people. The calling of the gentiles, it follows, from this view of the case, resembled the ingrafting of a tree ; nor did they unite in any other way with the people of God, but by striking their roots into the stock of Abraham.

*Thou wilt say then*—He states, in the person of the gentiles, every pretence they could possibly offer for themselves ; and so far from its being calculated to increase their pride, it afforded them cause for humility : for if the Jews were cut off on account of unbelief, and the gentiles ingrafted because of their faith, nothing remains for them but to recognise the grace of God, and thus be formed to modesty and submission ; for the natural consequence and inherent property of faith is to produce a low opinion of ourselves, and to cherish fear. This fear, however, is by no means opposed to the confidence and security of faith ; for Paul does not wish our belief to experience any vacillation, or any alternation between confidence and doubt, much less the shadow of consternation, or least particle of trepidation. What then will be the nature and character of this fear ? As the Lord orders us to be engaged in the con-

sideration of two subjects, so a twofold affection of the mind must necessarily be produced. Our heavenly Father wishes us to direct our unceasing attention to the wretched state and condition of our own nature. This can produce nothing else but horror, wearisomeness, perplexity, and despair ; and we must therefore be so completely thrown down, worn out, and bruised, as to pour out our complaints and groans to the Fountain of all pardon and love. This state of horror, produced by a consideration and reviewing of our own character, prevents not our minds from relying, and calmly resting on the goodness of Jehovah ; this wearisomeness precludes us not from the enjoyment of full consolation in the God of all comfort ; this perplexity, anxiety, and despair, debar us not from the possession of solid and firm joy and hope in the bosom of eternal Holiness, Wisdom, and Power. The fear, therefore, here described by the apostle, is opposed as an antidote to pride and contempt, because every one, in proportion to his arrogance, becomes too secure, and at last insolent against others ; and on this account we have cause so far to entertain fear, lest our heart, inflated with pride, should swell, extol, and magnify itself. But the apostle seems to cast some doubt upon our salvation, when he exhorts us to take care lest God spare not the gentiles. I answer, this exhortation, as it relates to the subduing of the flesh, which is always insolent even in the children of God, detracts nothing from the certainty and assurance of faith. We ought, however, particularly to observe, and fix in our memory, one of my late observations, that the apostle is not directing his discourse so much to individual unbelievers, as to the whole body of the gentiles, among whom there might be many inflated with pride without any cause, and who professed rather than possessed faith. Paul threatens,

not without reason, the cutting off of the gentiles, on account of those who had only the form of godliness, as will be pointed out again on another occasion.

*For if God spared not the natural*—A very powerful reason why we should repress all our high-mindedness ; for never ought the rejection of the Jews to recur to our memory without our shaking, and being appalled with horror : for what else caused their ruin but the contempt of the divine judgment, in which they were enveloped in consequence of their supineness and security, arising from the dignity with which they were honoured ? These natural branches were not spared ; what then shall become of us wild and foreign branches, if we become excessively high-minded ? This reflection, which is well calculated to inspire us with diffidence in our own powers, makes us cling with more boldness and closeness to the goodness of God. It is hence also again more clearly proved, that Paul addresses his discourse in common to the whole body of the gentiles, because the cutting off mentioned by Paul could not apply to individuals whose election is unchangeable, since it is founded on the eternal purpose of an all-wise God. Paul therefore threatens the gentiles that a punishment was prepared for their pride if they insulted the Jews, because God will again reconcile his former people to himself, from whom he has been divorced.

22 Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness ; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in : for God is able to graff them in again.

24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree ; how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive-tree ?

*Behold, therefore*—By placing the whole state of the case before the view of his readers, Paul confirms, in a more clear and luminous manner, the groundless nature of that pride in which the gentiles exulted over the Jews. The heathens behold in the Israelites an example of divine severity which ought to impress them with the deepest terror ; while, in their own case, they have a proof of grace and goodness, which ought to excite them to gratitude alone, and to extol not themselves, but the Lord, the fountain of all love and mercy. The following is the sense of the apostle :—“ Consider, first, your former character, before you insult over the calamity of the Jews ; for you were threatened with the same divine severity, unless you had been delivered from it by his gratuitous goodness. Consider, in the second place, your present character ; for your salvation can only be secured by acknowledging, with humbleness of mind, the mercy of infinite love : should you, however, forget yourself, and exult with insolence over the Jews, the same ruin into which they have fallen will be assigned as your lot : for it is not sufficient to have embraced, at one period only of your life, the grace of God, unless during its whole course you steadily pursue the call of your Saviour, and walk in the light of his countenance :” for it is the bounden duty of those who have been enlightened by divine truth, and put on the very armour of light, to have their meditations always fixed on their *own perseverance* ; for those professors

by no means continue in the goodness of a merciful Lord, who, after having answered for some time to the divine call, begin finally to loathe the kingdom of heaven, and not to run the race that is set before them ; such ingratitude causes them to merit a *second blindness*. He does not add each individual believer, as stated above, but compares, at the same time, the gentiles with the Jews. It is true that every individual of the Jewish nation received the recompense due to his unbelief, when he renounced the kingdom of God, and all called to be believers from the heathens were vessels of mercy. We must, however, always keep our attention fixed upon Paul's design, for he was desirous that the gentiles should depend on the eternal covenant of God, that they might join their own salvation with that of the chosen people. To prevent them from being offended and stumbling at the rejection of the Jews, as if the ancient adoption of that people had been disannulled, Paul was desirous to impress their minds with terror by the example of the punishment inflicted upon the Israelites, that they might keep their attention fixed, with reverential awe, upon this divine judgment. For why do we indulge with such unbridled licentiousness in curious disputes, but from our general neglect of those inquiries which are deservedly calculated to teach us the invaluable lesson of humility ? The condition is added, *if they continue in his goodness*, because he is not here disputing with regard to individuals who are elected, but the whole body of the nation. I confess, indeed, that every abuser of divine goodness merits to be deprived of the grace which is given him ; but it would be improper to say particularly of any of the pious, that God showed the believer pity when he chose him, provided he continue in that mercy ; for the perseverance of faith, which perfects the effect of

divine grace in us, flows from election itself. Paul therefore teaches us that the gentiles were admitted into the hope of eternal life on this very condition, that they might retain the possession of it by their gratitude ; and certainly the horrible revolt of all Christendom, which afterwards followed, afforded a luminous evidence of the necessity of this admonition ; for after God had nearly in a moment so watered the then known world, in almost every direction, with his grace, that religion flourished in the whole Roman empire, the truth of the gospel soon afterwards disappeared, and the treasure of salvation was removed. What reason can be assigned for so sudden a change, but the falling away of the heathens from their calling ? *Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off*—We here understand the sense in which Paul now threatens the cutting off of those whom he had before confessed to be ingrafted into the hope of life by the election of God ; for, indeed, although this cannot befall elect individuals, yet such exhortation is absolutely required to subdue the pride of the flesh, which, as it is in reality opposed to their salvation, so it ought deservedly to be kept in constant terror by the fear of damnation. For Christians, so far as they are enlightened by faith, hear for their assurance that the calling of God is without repentance ; but since they carry about with them a body of flesh, which indulges in lasciviousness against the grace of God, the voice of divine truth, *take heed lest thou fall*, teaches them the important lesson of humility. My former solution of the difficulty must be kept in view, that Paul is not here disputing concerning the special election of every individual believer, but opposing the Jews to the gentiles ; and he does not therefore so much address the elect in these words, as those boasters of their having taken possession of

the situation formerly held by the Jews ; nay, at the same time he addresses the gentiles, and directs his remarks to the whole body of them in common, among whom there were many believers, and members of Christ only in name. Should the question be proposed concerning individuals, how any one may be cut off after he has been grafted in, and the contrary ? it can be answered by considering three kinds of grafting in, and two of cutting off. For, in the first place, the children of believers are grafted in, to whom the promise is due according to the covenant entered into with their fathers ; secondly, those are grafted in who receive, indeed, the seed of the gospel, but it either does not strike its roots sufficiently deep, or is choked before it brings forth fruit ; thirdly, the elect are grafted in, who are illuminated for everlasting life by the immutable purpose of God. The first are cut off when they reject the promise given the fathers, or otherwise do not receive it, from ingratitude : the second, when the seed has become withered or corrupted, and the danger of this evil threatens all with respect to their own nature : the admonition given by Paul, it must be acknowledged, pertains also in some measure to believers, for the purpose of preventing them from indulging in the torpid dulness and sluggishness of the flesh. Suffice it to observe, on the present passage, that the same punishment inflicted by God upon the Jews is denounced against the gentiles, if their conduct is similar.

*For God is able*—This argument would be cold and lifeless, when applied to profane persons ; for although they grant Jehovah to be possessed of power, yet, because they consider it is shut up at a distance in heaven, they generally deprive it of all vigour and efficacy. But since the faithful, whenever the power of God is named, regard it as a work

actually present, Paul considered the mere statement of it sufficient to appal their minds. The apostle lays it down as a settled maxim, that God so avenges the incredulity of his people, as never entirely to forget his clemency; thus also, on other occasions, he often restores his kingdom, after he had appeared to deprive the Jews of it entirely. Paul shows also, by a comparison, how much easier it is to subvert the present appearance of things, than to establish them; how much more readily the natural branches, when restored to the place from which they had been cut off, derive substance from their own root, than the wild and unfruitful of a foreign stock. The same relation and analogy take place between the Jews and gentiles.

25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant*—He is desirous to arrest more fully the attention of his readers, by professing that he would make them acquainted with a subject still hid in mystery. Paul has sufficient reason for adopting this plan, for he is desirous, by a concise and plain sentence, to bring this very difficult subject to a conclusion, and would have expected to read the declaration he makes on this occasion. The clause, *lest you*

*should be wise in your own conceits*, points out the apostle's scope and intention to be the restraining of the insolence of the gentiles, lest they be elated in pride against the Jews. This exhortation was very necessary, lest the revolt of the Jews from God should produce an immoderate effect upon the feelings of men of weak minds, as if a perpetual conclusion was put to the salvation of any of the children of men. This is equally useful for us at the present period, that we may know the salvation of the remaining number, which the Lord will at last gather to himself, lies concealed, being sealed, as it were, with a ring. Should the long-continued delay ever induce us to despair, let us not forget the word *mystery*, by which Paul instructs us, that the manner of the conversion of the Jews will be neither common nor usual; and he thus points out the extreme rashness and folly of those who shall endeavour to measure it by their own sense and judgment. For what is more ridiculous, than to consider that to be incredible, which is removed from our sense? since it is therefore called a mystery, because we cannot comprehend it before the time of its being revealed. It has been disclosed to us, as it was to the Romans, that our faith, satisfied with the word of truth, may keep us waiting in hope, until the event itself shall bring it to light. *That blindness in part*—The apostle was desirous to diminish the harshness of his language by the words *in part*, which relate, in my opinion, neither to time nor multitude, but convey the idea, *in some measure*. The particle, *until*, does not imply either the order or progress of time, but merely, *so that the fulness of the gentiles*. The meaning, therefore, of the passage is the following: “God has in some measure so blinded Israel, that the gospel may be transferred to the gentiles, while the Jews reject its light, and the former seize, as it

were, upon the vacant possession." This blindness of the Jews, therefore, is subservient to the providence of God for the purpose of accomplishing the ordained salvation of the gentiles. The *fulness of the gentiles* means *a large concourse*, for they did not, as formerly, unite themselves to the Jews, as a few rare and scattered proselytes; but the change was such, that the heathens formed almost the entire body of the church.

*And so all Israel*—Many expositors make this passage relate to the Jewish people, as if the meaning of Paul was, "that religion should be renewed among the Israelites, as before;" but I extend the sense of the word *Israel* to the whole people of God, and thus interpret it:—"When the gentiles shall have entered into the church, and the Jews, at the same time, shall betake themselves to the obedience of faith, and forsake their present revolt from the Saviour of the lost, the salvation of the whole Israel of God, which must be collected from both, will thus be completed, and in such a manner that the descendants of the father of the faithful, as being the first-born in the family of God, shall enjoy the pre-eminence." I consider this exposition to agree better with the context, because Paul was desirous to point out here the consummation of the kingdom of Christ, which was by no means limited to the Jews, but comprehends the whole world. And, in the same manner, (Gal. vi. 16,) he denominates the church, which consisted equally of Jews and gentiles, the *Israel of God*, and opposes a people, thus collected from a scattered and waste state, to the carnal children of Abraham, who had departed from his faith. *As*—This testimony of Isaiah does not confirm the whole sentence, but merely one member of it; namely, that the sons of Abraham are partakers of redemption. If any interpreter adopts the

following as the sense of the prophet, "that Christ was promised and offered to the Jews, but they had been deprived of the advantages of a Saviour, because he had been rejected by them," he drops out of his consideration part of the meaning of Isaiah; namely, "that there would still remain a certain number of Israelites, who, after having repented, would enjoy the grace of deliverance through the Messiah." Paul does not cite the passage from Isaiah with verbal accuracy, for the prophet writes, "And the Redeemer shall come to Sion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." (Isa. lix. 20.) We need not distress ourselves unnecessarily on this point, for we ought to consider how suitably the apostles adapt all their proofs from the Old Testament to their own purpose, and they were only desirous to point their readers to the passages in the original, where they referred them to the fountain itself. Besides, in this prophecy, although deliverance is promised to the spiritual people of God, under whom the gentiles are also included, yet, because the Jews are the first-born, which is declared by the prophet, it was necessary that the prediction should chiefly be fulfilled in the posterity of Abraham. For the Scripture attributes to the whole people of God the name *Israelites*, because of the excellence of the nation, which the Lord preferred to all others. Isaiah expressly says, the Redeemer will come from Sion, in consequence of his having a regard to the ancient covenant. He adds also, that those will be redeemed in Jacob, who have repented and turned from their transgression. The God of Jacob distinctly claims some seed to himself in these words, that redemption may continue to be effectual in his elect and peculiar nation. Paul felt no scruple in following the common Greek translation, where it is said, "The Redeemer will

come out of Mount Sion," although the language of the prophet in the Hebrew, (Isa. lix. 20,) "he will come to Sion," suited the purpose of the apostle better. The same reason also can be assigned for the second part of the quotation, "and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob," for Paul considered this sufficiently to answer his view, because it is the peculiar office of Christ to reconcile an apostate and covenant-breaking people to God; and some conversion was certainly to be expected, lest the whole posterity of Isaac should, at the same time, perish in one common ruin.

*For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away*—Paul, in the last prophecy quoted from Isaiah, had briefly touched on the duty of the Messiah, for the purpose of instructing the Jews concerning the great advantages which might chiefly be expected to flow from the establishment of his kingdom; yet he intentionally added, with the same design, these few words from Jeremiah. (Chapter xxxi. 33, 34. See Hebrews viii. 8—12; x. 16, 17.) Paul designedly subjoined, in his quotation from Isaiah, "shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," because it afforded a confirmation of the point he was discussing. His declaration concerning the conversion of the Israelites might appear to be unworthy of credit, during the confirmed obstinacy displayed by that nation. This obstacle is removed by stating that the new covenant consisted in the gratuitous remission of sin. For it follows, as a conclusion, from the words of the prophet, that God would have only to forgive the crime of perfidy and other sins, in his treatment of an apostate people.

28 As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 For the gifts and

calling of God *are* without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

*As concerning the gospel*—He proves the greatest and worst crime in the Jews' unbelief, not to be of such a nature as to entitle them, on that account, to be despised by the gentiles. For they had been so blinded for a time by the providence of God, (such is Paul's doctrine,) that a way might be formed for the gospel to go to the gentiles ; but they had not for ever been excluded from the grace of God. Paul confesses the Jews are alienated from God for the present on account of the gospel, that salvation, which had first been intrusted to them, might be carried to the gentiles. God, however, is not unmindful of the covenant which he had made with their fathers, by which he testified his embracing in love that nation by his eternal purpose and counsel. The apostle confirms this by an important and excellent truth, that the grace of the divine calling cannot be in vain, which is implied by Paul's expressions, *the gifts and callings of God are without repentance*. *The gifts and callings of God* mean, by hypallage, the kindness and benefit of the calling of God ; nor ought this to be understood as relating to any other calling but that by which God adopted the posterity of Abraham into his covenant, since this was the particular subject in dispute. In the same manner, by the word *election*, he meant a little before the secret purpose and counsel by which the Jews were formerly distinguished from the gentiles.

Paul, it must be remembered, is not here treating of the private election of any individual, but the common adoption of a whole nation, which may externally indeed appear to have fallen off for a time, but has not been cut off from the root. Because the Jews had been deprived from their own fault of their right to salvation, which had been promised them, Paul, that some hope may continue concerning the remnant, contends that the counsel and decree of God remain firm and immutable, by which he had once condescended to elect them for himself as a peculiar people. If, therefore, it was impossible for the Lord to depart in any way from the covenant which he had entered into with Abraham, (Gen. xvii. 7,) "I will be the God of thy seed," he did not entirely turn away his kindness from the Jewish nation. The apostle does not oppose the gospel to election, as if there was a disagreement between them, for God calls his elect; but because the gospel was immediately, contrary to the expectations of the world, preached to the gentiles, he justly compares this grace with the ancient election of the Jews, that had been manifested so many ages before. It is, therefore, denominated election from its antiquity, for God passed by the rest of the world, and chose this one people for himself from among all other nations. When Paul says, *for the fathers' sakes*, he does not trace the origin of election to the worth of the patriarchs; but teaches, that according to the form of the covenant, which included the seed as well as the fathers, grace had been propagated by lineal descent from the patriarchs to their posterity. It has been already stated how the heathens obtained mercy by the unbelief of the Jews; namely, God, who was angry with the Jews on account of their unbelief, turned aside his kindness to the gentiles. The following sentence, *these have now been*

*made unbelievers*, when mercy was bestowed on the gentiles, is a little harsh, but it involves no absurdity, since Paul is not assigning the cause of this blindness, but only means, that God had deprived the Jews of the blessing he transferred to the gentiles. Because the Israelites had lost the blessing by their own unbelief, to prevent the gentiles from imagining they had attained the gospel by the merit of faith, he makes mention of nothing else than mercy. The sum of the whole is, “Because God was desirous to have pity on the gentiles, the Jews were, on this occasion, deprived of the light of faith.

*For God hath concluded them all in unbelief*—A very beautiful sentence, which shows there is no cause why any, who entertain the least hopes of their own salvation, should despair of the salvation of others. Whatever their present character may be, they formerly were the same as all others; and if, by the alone mercy of God, they have emerged from the depths of infidelity, they ought to leave room for the operations of the same pity in converting unbelievers to the truth. For he makes the Jews equal with the gentiles in their state of guiltiness, for the purpose of convincing both that the entrance and access to eternal salvation are fully opened to all nations and classes of mankind. There is only one mercy that saves, and this offers itself, with the same freedom, to Jew and heathen. This opinion agrees with the testimony of Hosea, (ii. 23,) quoted above, (Rom. ix. 25,) “I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people.” Paul does not mean that God so hardens all men, as their unbelief is to be imputed to the Fountain of infinite mercy, tenderness, and love; but such are the dispensations of his all-gracious providence, that the whole human race stands convicted of unbelief, and is condemned by the divine judgment; and the

design of Omnipotence, in this arrangement, is to make salvation depend on his own goodness alone, and to bury and sink for ever all the claims of merit. Paul intends to impress on his readers the two following truths—"That there is nothing besides the mere grace of God, in any individual of the human race, on account of the merit of which he deserves to have a preference shown him above others ; and that the Supreme Being, in the dispensation of his grace, is not hindered from bestowing it on whomsoever he chooses." The word *mercy* is emphatic, for it means that the Judge of all is under no restriction from any of the sons of Adam, and he therefore saves all gratuitously, because all are equally sunk in ruin. Nothing can equal the gross conception of those madmen, who infer from this passage the salvation of the whole human race : Paul simply means, that Jews and gentiles obtain salvation from no other cause than the mercy of God, that he may leave no ground for any one to complain. It is an undoubted truth that this mercy is offered equally to all, and granted to none but those who have sought it by faith.

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things : to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

*O the depth*—The apostle here, for the first time, breaks forth into language which arises spontaneously in the feelings of believers, from a pious con-

sideration of the works of an infinite Creator. Paul restrains, in passing, the audacity of impiety, which is accustomed to rail against the judgments of God. When, therefore, we hear *the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God*, we cannot express how much power this admiration ought to have in repressing the rashness of the fleshly mind. For Paul, after having disputed from the word and Spirit of the Most High, overcome, at last, by the sublimity of so great a secret, can do nothing else than exclaim in astonishment, that the *riches of the wisdom of God* are too great for our reason to fathom their depths. Should we, therefore, at any time, enter upon a discourse concerning the eternal counsels of a merciful Father, we ought always to restrain and curb both our genius and language, speaking with sobriety, and within the limits prescribed by the word of God, and our disputation should at last end in wonder and astonishment. For we ought not to feel ashamed, if our wisdom does not surpass his, who, being carried into the third heavens, saw mysteries that man could not utter; nor could he find any other conclusion for so elevated a subject, than this humiliation of his own powers. The interpretation of those commentators is forced, who consider *depth* to be taken as an adjective, and thus analyze the expressions of the apostle—"O the deep riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God"—meaning, by *riches*, liberality and bounty. Paul, I doubt not, extols the deep riches of wisdom and knowledge in the Lord of glory. *How unsearchable*—He expresses the same subject in different words, which is a kind of repetition common among the Hebrews. For, having spoken of *judgments*, he adds, *ways*; meaning God's plans, or manner of acting, or order of government. He still goes on with his exclamation, and the more he extols the depths of the divine

secret, the more forcibly does he deter us from the curiosity of our investigations. Let us learn, therefore, to make no other inquiries concerning the Lord, but as Scripture has revealed them; otherwise we shall enter a labyrinth, from which we shall not find it easy to make our escape. We must here observe, that the apostle is not speaking of every kind of mysteries, but of those which, being hidden in the mind of infinite Wisdom, he wishes us only to admire and adore.

*For who hath known the mind of the Lord?*—He here, as it were, lays his hand on human presumption, and restrains it from murmuring against the judgments of a glorious Saviour. He assigns two reasons against such complaints and murmurings. All the race of mortals, according to his first argument, are prevented, by their complete blindness, from examining the predestination of God by their own proper judgment; and it is the height of rashness and folly to enter into disputes concerning a subject altogether unknown. The second reason adduced by Paul is, that we have no cause for complaining of God, since no human being can boast, as if the Lord of all power was a debtor to man; on the other hand, all are dependants on his kindness and bounty. Every inquirer into the secret counsels of infinite Wisdom should remember to confine his mind within the limits of the oracles of God, and never, in investigating the predestination of perfect Knowledge and Love, advance beyond the barriers of Scripture. Although the lost children of Adam, as we know, can discern nothing in this subject with greater clearness than a blind man in the midst of the thickest darkness, yet the certainty of our faith, which arises not from the acute sagacity of human judgment, but the illumination of the Spirit alone, cannot be weakened or undermined by

this cause. For, according even to Paul himself, in another passage, who, though he affirms that all the mysteries of God far exceed the comprehension of our capacity, yet the faithful, as he owns, have the mind of the Lord ; for they have not received the spirit of this world, but of the Fountain and Author of all good, who makes them acquainted with his otherwise incomprehensible kindness. As, therefore, by our own powers, we are wholly unable to arrive at a certain acquaintance with the secrets of God, so, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are admitted to a sure and clear knowledge of these hidden truths. If it is our duty to follow at present the leadings of the Spirit, we ought, when forsaken by him, to stop, and take, as it were, our stand. Whoever affects to know more than the Spirit has revealed, will be overwhelmed by the immense splendour of his unapproachable light. We must never lose sight of the distinction lately mentioned between the secret counsel of God, and his will revealed in Scripture. For though the whole doctrine of the word of truth surpasses, in its sublimity, human genius, yet the faithful, who follow with reverence and soberness the guidings of the Spirit, are not debarred from approaching the records of eternal Wisdom ; but the secret counsel of God, the depth and height of which can be reached by no inquiry, is to be considered in a very different point of view. (Isa. xl. 13 ; Wisdom ix. 13 ; 1 Cor. ii. 16.)

*Or who hath first given to him—*This is another reason by which the justice of God is very forcibly and ably defended against all the accusations and charges of the wicked,—that, if no obligation is imposed on God by the merits of any human being, it is impossible for any one justly to expostulate with infinite Justice, because he does not receive a remu-

neration. For it is absolutely required that every human being, who is desirous to force any one to do him a kindness, should be able to produce those duties, by the performance of which he is entitled to make such a claim. God, according to this passage of Paul, cannot be accused of injustice, unless it can be said the Source and Fountain of all law does not pay every one his due. It is also evident, no person can be deprived of his rights by God, since he is indebted to none; for who can boast of any of his own works, by which he merited the grace of infinite Love? This is a striking passage, and teaches us, that it is not in our power, by any good actions of our own, to challenge our eternal Sovereign to grant us salvation; but he prevents the undeserving by his gratuitous goodness; for Paul shows what men are in the habit of doing, as well as their ability. If we are indeed ready carefully to examine our character, we shall find that infinite Majesty is in no respect our debtor, while all mankind stand arraigned before his judgment-seat; so far, therefore, from deserving any favour at his hand, eternal death is too slight a punishment for our disobedience. Nor does Paul only conclude that Jehovah is not our debtor, on account of our corrupt and vicious nature; but he asserts, man, provided he were entire and perfect, could produce nothing before God, by which his favour might be conciliated and secured; because, from the very commencement of his being, the child of Adam is so bound to his Maker, by the very law of creation, that he has nothing which can be considered his own property. We shall, therefore, endeavour without effect to rob the all-perfect Lord of his right to determine to do freely what he chooses with the works of his hands, according to his own unerring wisdom; for nothing done by the creatures of a day, has made the King

of glory their debtors, and the Supreme Being is laid under no obligation to the potsherds of the earth.

*For of him, and through him*—This is a confirmation of the preceding opinion, for he shows it is impossible for us to be able to boast in any good of our own against God, since we ourselves are created by him out of nothing, and our very being now consists in him. Paul hence concludes, that equity demands our existence to be directed and devoted to his glory. How absurd would it be to refer the creatures, which the Father of all mercy hath formed and preserved, to any other purpose than the illustration of his glory ! The Greek preposition here used, I know, is sometimes improperly understood to mean *in*; but, since the more common acceptation of the term corresponds better with the present argument, I prefer to retain it rather than have recourse to a sense rarely used. The whole order of nature is subverted, (such is the sum of the apostle's argument,) unless the same God, who is the beginning of all things, be also the end. *To him be glory*—He now confidently adopts the proposition as undoubtedly proved, that God's glory ought, on all occasions, to remain undiminished. The opinion, if understood in a general sense, will be cold and uninteresting, and its force and emphasis depend on the circumstance of the passage, and convey the following important truth—“ That our only Refuge and Tower justly claims to himself entire and unbounded dominion and power, and that nothing beside the glory of the King of kings is to be sought in the state of mankind, and of the whole world.” The absurdity, unreasonableness, nay, folly and madness are here clearly established of all sentiments, which tend to derogate from the splendour of the glory of the Father of lights, and Fountain of all good.

## CHAPTER XII.

1 I BESEECH you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

After Paul has treated of those subjects with which it was necessary for him to commence in erecting the kingdom of God, and shown that we must seek for righteousness from one God, and look for salvation only from his mercy, and that the sum of all our happiness is placed and daily offered to us in Christ alone, he now, according to the very best arrangement, proceeds to consider the method for forming our moral character. Since the soul is renewed, as it were, into a heavenly life, by the knowledge of God and of Christ, which bringeth salvation, the conduct of life itself, also, is in a manner formed and regulated by the holy admonitions, exhortations, and precepts of this wisdom. For you will in vain manifest your zeal and care for the regulating of men's conduct in life, if you have not first proved that the origin of all righteousness exists in God and Christ, and thus shown how the sons of Adam may be raised from the death of sin. This is, indeed, the leading distinction between the gospel and philosophy. For, though philosophers discourse in a noble manner, and which merits great praise on account of the genius they display concerning morals, yet all the ornament that shines forth in their precepts is nothing else but the splendid outside of a building without a founda-

tion; for, by omitting the principles on which morality should rest, they present to our view a mutilated doctrine, and, as it were, a body without a head. The manner of teaching by the Papists is much the same; for, though they incidentally speak of faith in Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, yet it is distinctly seen how much nearer they approach the heathen philosophers than Christ or his apostles. And, as the philosophers, before they make any laws concerning morals, discuss the end and design of goodness, and inquire into those sources of virtues from which they may afterwards search out and derive all their duties, so Paul hath here determined the principle from which all the parts of holiness flow; namely, that we are redeemed by the Lord for this very end, that we may consecrate to him ourselves and all our members. But we will be amply repaid by a close examination of every part of this passage.

*I beseech you by the mercies of God*—We know that men of corrupt minds gladly lay hold of every thing proposed in Scripture concerning the immense goodness of God for the purpose of indulging the flesh. Hypocrites, on the other hand, as if the grace of the Lord extinguishes their zeal for a holy life, and opens a gate for boldness in sin, maliciously obscure, as far as they can, their knowledge of God's goodness. And this declaration of the apostle shows that men can never worship God with earnest affection, nor be roused with sufficient eagerness to fear and obey him, until they clearly understand how much they owe to divine mercy. It is sufficient for Papists if they extort by terror I know not what kind of compulsory obedience. But Paul, that he may bind us to God, not by servile fear, but by a voluntary and cheerful love of righteousness, allures us by the sweetness of that grace in which our salvation is contained, and, at the same time, upbraids our ingrati-

tude if, after experiencing so kind and liberal a Father, we do not in return study to devote ourselves entirely to his service. And Paul's exhortation is more powerful in proportion as he excels all others in illustrating the grace of God. For that heart must be harder than iron which is not inflamed by the doctrine already stated by the apostle to be the love of God, and does not feel the abundant kindness of the Lord displayed in Christ Jesus. What, then, shall we say of those, who consider all exhortations to a life of virtue to be taken away, when the salvation of man is placed in the grace of God alone, since a pious mind can be formed to obey God by no precepts, and by no sanctions, so surely as by a serious meditation upon the divine mercy exhibited to himself? We may here also, at the same time, observe the gentleness of the spirit of the apostle, because he preferred rather to manage and govern the faithful by admonitions and faithful entreaties than by rigid commands, since he knew such a mode of treatment would be more successful with docile characters. *That you may present your bodies*—To know ourselves to be consecrated to God is the beginning of a proper course of life for attaining good works, since it hence follows, that we cease to live to ourselves, with the intention of devoting all the actions of our lives to God. Two things, therefore, are here to be considered. First, that we are the Lord's; in the second place, that we ought to be devoted to him on this very account—because it is dishonouring the holiness of God to offer any thing to him which has not first been consecrated. This position being granted, it necessarily follows that we ought to meditate on holiness during our whole life; and, if we relapse into uncleanness, we cannot avoid the appearance of sacrilege, since it is nothing else than the profaning of what was sanctified. Great propriety of express-

sion is also everywhere preserved. Paul particularly states that our bodies ought to be offered as a sacrifice to God, by which he insinuates that we have not authority over ourselves, but are wholly devoted to the power of God, which must necessarily be the case, unless we renounce and, therefore, deny ourselves. He afterwards declares, by the additional epithets, the quality of the sacrifice. For, when he calls it *living*, he signifies that we are offered as a sacrifice to God for the purpose of being raised to newness of life, and of having our former life destroyed, and our conduct changed. He means, by the name *holiness*, the property of the sacrifice we have mentioned ; for a sacrificial oblation is confirmed when sanctification has preceded its ratification. The third epithet not only teaches us that our life is properly regulated, if we conduct this sacrificing of ourselves according to the will of God, but also produces uncommon consolation, because it instructs us that our endeavours and zeal are grateful and acceptable to God, when we devote ourselves to innocence and holiness. And by *bodies* he does not merely mean bones and flesh, but the whole mass of which we consist ; and he cites this phrase that he may point out all our constituent parts by this one expression ; for the members of our bodies are the instruments by which we execute the actions of our lives. In another passage the apostle (1 Thess. v. 23) requires of us not only our whole body, but our soul and spirit. In ordering us to offer ourselves, he makes an allusion to the sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation, which were presented before the altar as in the presence of God ; and he elegantly points out our alacrity in listening to the commands of God, for the purpose of immediately yielding them obedience. Whence we infer, that all those who do not intend to worship God, err and wander in a miserable manner

from the truth. We now, also, understand what kind of sacrifices Paul commends to the Christian church; for, being reconciled to God by the one sacrifice of our Lord Christ Jesus, we are, on his account, all made priests, with the view of dedicating ourselves and all we have and do to the glory of the Most Holy. No expiatory sacrifice remains to be offered, nor can this be attempted without great dis-honour to the cross of Christ. *Your reasonable service*—I think the apostle added this sentence to sup-  
ply an explication and confirmation of the preceding, as if he had said, “Present yourselves a sacrifice to God, if you are resolved in your minds to offer him worship, for this is the proper way of honouring the Lord of heaven and earth; and such as depart from the method here prescribed, entirely err as worshippers of an infinite Sovereign. And if God is then properly worshipped, when all our actions are regu-  
lated according to his commands, let all human inven-  
tions in worship be removed and driven from among us, which God himself justly abominates, since ‘obe-  
dience is better than sacrifice.’” Men, indeed, smile with complacency on their own inventions, and dis-  
play a vain show of wisdom, as is stated in another part of the apostle’s writings; but we hear what the heavenly Judge declares in opposition to this by the mouth of Paul. For, when the apostle calls that a rational worship which God has commanded, he rejects every thing as foolish, insipid, and marked by unhallowed rashness, which we endeavour to establish in opposition to the rule of his word.

*And be not conformed to this world*—The expres-  
sion *world* has many significations, and is here under-  
stood to mean the disposition, inclination, and char-  
acter of mankind. The apostle justly forbids us to be conformed to such a mass of corruption; for, as the whole world lieth in the wicked one, we ought to

put off every part of the mere human character, if we desire truly to put on Christ. And, to remove all doubt, he explains it by the contrary, when he orders us to be *transformed in the renewing of our mind*; for, in the Scriptures, these antitheses frequently occur, and add much to the clearness of the subject under consideration. But in this case attend to the renewal which is demanded of us; namely, not of the flesh only, for this word is explained by the Sorbonnists to mean the lower and animal part of our nature, but of the mind, which is the most excellent part, and to which the philosophers assign complete sovereignty; for they denominate it the governing power; and reason, according to them, is imagined to be the queen in ruling over man, and distinguished as the highest for wisdom. Paul even casts this empress from her throne, and reduces her to nothing, when he teaches us to be renewed in the *spirit of our mind*. For, much as we may flatter ourselves, yet the opinion of Christ remains true, that the whole man must be born again in every person who is desirous to enter into the kingdom of God, because we are entirely alienated both in mind and heart from the divine righteousness. *To prove what is his will*

—Here you have the end and design for which we ought to put on a new mind,—that, bidding adieu to our own counsels and desires, and those of our fellow men, we may devote ourselves entirely to the sole will of God, whose knowledge is true wisdom. But if the renewal of our mind is necessary for the purpose of proving what the will of the Most High is, we may hence see how much this mind is opposed to God. The epithets are added for the purpose of praising the will of infinite Truth, that we may labour with greater cheerfulness to attain this object. And our obstinacy can only be reduced to order by ascribing the sure and lasting praise of righteousness

and perfection to the will of God. The world is convinced that its works are good. Paul opposes such an opinion, and asserts good and evil are to be determined according to the will of God. The world applauds itself, and delights in its own fancies and imaginations; but Paul affirms that nothing pleases God but his own commands. The world, that it may discover perfection, forsakes the word of God, and is inclined to adopt new inventions. Perfection is only to be found, according to Paul, in the will of infinite Purity; and he proves that every one who transgresses this law of absolute holiness is deluded by a false imagination.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

*For I say, through the grace*—If the illative particle *for* is not considered to be superfluous, this sentence will very well agree with the former. For since he was desirous that all our study should be now devoted to the will of God, his next object was to withdraw us from all vain curiosity. It may, however, be considered a mere affirmation, since this particle is frequently redundant in Paul, and the sense will in this instance also be very coherent. But, before giving any command, he informs them of the authority with which he was intrusted, that they may pay the same attention to the word of Paul as of God himself. For his expressions convey the following meaning: “I do not speak of myself, but, as an ambassador of God, I communicate to you those commandments which he enjoined myself.” *Grace*, as it is a former part of the epistle, means apostleship,

by which he commends the goodness of the Most Holy in bestowing this blessing, and intimates that he had not forced himself into such an office by any rashness of his own, but had engaged in it at the call of God. By such a preface, therefore, while he secures his own authority, he necessarily binds the Romans to obey him, unless they wish to despise God in the person of his servant. The precept then follows for the purpose of withdrawing us from the investigation of such subjects as can only harass the mind, without edification ; and Paul orders us not to undertake more than our capacity and vocation permit. He at the same time admonishes us to think and meditate only on such subjects as are calculated to make us *sober* and *modest*. I prefer this view of the passage to the translation given by Erasmus, *that no one think proudly of himself*, because this sense is more forced, and does not so well agree with the context. The sentence, *not to think more highly than he ought*, shows that we exceed the bounds of wisdom if we engage ourselves in such subjects as ought not to occupy our attention. But *to think soberly*, is to devote ourselves to those studies by which we may feel ourselves trained and educated to a due sense of modesty. *According as God hath dealt to every one*—Paul here expresses the cause and reason of the sober wisdom which he commends. For, since the distribution of graces is various, every one has determined upon the best manner for attaining wisdom, who confines himself within that grace of faith which is conferred upon him by the Lord. There is not only a useless affectation of wisdom in discussing subjects superfluous of themselves, and the knowledge of which is of no advantage ; but even in obtaining an acquaintance with what is otherwise useful, if, by not considering the extent of our faculties, we exceed in temerity and boldness the measure

of our understanding ; and God does not suffer such unwarrantable eagerness to escape without due punishment ; for we frequently observe a bewildering maze of absurd ravings take possession of men, who, by a foolish ambition, exalt themselves above the boundaries determined by the Giver of all good. In fine, a very striking part of our rational sacrifice consists in every one presenting himself to God to be governed and directed by a mild and docile spirit. Moreover, Paul, in opposing faith to human judgment, restrains us from indulging our own opinions, and designedly prescribes, at the same time, a safe measure for the faithful, by ordering them in humility not to overstep the bounds marked out by their own imperfections.

4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office ; 5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith ; 7 Or ministry, *let us wait on our ministering* ; or he that teacheth, on teaching ; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation : he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

*For as* — Paul now confirms the position that he had laid down, and by which he limited the wisdom of each believer in Christ according to the measure of his faith, and establishes it by considering the nature of his calling. For we are called on this condition, that we may unite, as in one body, since Christ has established the same society and communion among all his people that exists among the members of the

human body ; and, because men could not form, by any effort of their own, so intimate a connexion with each other, the Messiah became himself the bond of that union. Because, therefore, the same wisdom which is observed in the human body ought to exist also in the society of the faithful, Paul proves by this very comparison how necessary it is for each member of the body of Christ to consider what best suits his nature and character, what his capacity, what his calling. Since also this similitude has various parts, it can be applied in the following manner to the case under consideration : That as the members of our body have distinct powers, and are all distinct in themselves, and no one member possesses at the same time all powers, or takes to itself the offices which belong to others ; so God has dispensed to us various endowments, and, by this distinction, established among us an order which he wished to be preserved ; that each believer might regulate himself according to the measure of his own ability, and not thrust himself into duties belonging to others ; and that no individual might desire at the same time to have all, but, content with his own lot, voluntarily refrain from usurping the offices assigned to others. By expressly pointing out the communion that exists among us, he clearly intimates how great diligence ought to be exerted for appropriating to the common good of the whole body of the church the powers which each member individually possesses.

*Having gifts*—Paul does not simply now preach concerning the cherishing of brotherly love, but he commends modesty and humility, which are the best means for regulating the whole course of our lives and all our conduct. Every person is desirous to have so great a supply as to stand in no need from his brethren ; but the very bond of this mutual communication consists in no individual having sufficient

for himself, but in his being compelled to borrow from others. I confess, therefore, that the society of the pious consists in each being contented with his own measure, while he bestows upon his brethren the gifts, which he has received, and suffers himself to be assisted in turn by the gifts of others. But the apostle was particularly desirous to repress that pride, which he knew to be innate in mankind, and to prevent believers from being disappointed because all gifts were not bestowed upon them. Paul, therefore, shows that every disciple of Christ has his own part assigned him, with the best intention and counsel of infinite Wisdom; since it was necessary for the common salvation of the body that no single person should be so furnished with the fulness of gifts as to despise any of his brethren with impunity. Here, therefore, we have the chief object aimed at by the apostle, that all things are not equally calculated for all, but the good things of our heavenly Father are so distributed that each has a limited portion. Every individual also ought to be so intent upon bestowing his own gifts for the edification of the church, that none may forsake his own function and enter upon another's. For the safety of the church is preserved by this very beautiful order and, as it were, symmetry—where each of himself so contributes to the common good what he hath received from the Lord as not to impede others. Every perverter of this order fights with God, by whose ordination it was established. For the difference of gifts has not proceeded from the decree of man, but because the Lord hath thought fit to dispense his grace in this manner. *Or prophecy*—He now adduces certain gifts for the purpose of exemplifying the truth of his statement, and shows how each ought to be employed in the use of his own powers as the means for preserving his station. Since particular gifts are

determined by their own boundaries, the mere declining from such fixed limits contributes to their corruption. This sentence, which is a little confused, ought to be arranged in the following order : " He that hath prophecy, let him prophesy according to the analogy of faith ; he that hath ministry, let him use it for ministering ; he that hath doctrine, let him use it for teaching." Every member of the church who shall keep his attention fixed on this as the mark to be aimed at, will confine himself within his own proper limits. This passage, however, is understood in various senses ; for some mean by *prophecy* the power of prediction, which flourished in the church at its commencement, as the Lord was at that time desirous, by every possible means, to commend the dignity and excellence of his kingdom. And what is added, *according to the proportion of faith*, they consider ought to be referred to all the clauses. But I prefer the opinion of those commentators, who take the word in a more extended sense, and apply it to the peculiar gift of explaining revelation according as any one executes with skill and dexterity the office of an interpreter in declaring the will of God. Prophecy, therefore, at this period, is nothing else in the Christian church than the proper understanding of Scripture, and a peculiar faculty of explaining the same, since all the ancient prophecies, and all the oracles of God, were contained in Christ and his gospel. For Paul understood it in this sense (1 Cor. xiv. 5) when he said, " I wish you to speak with tongues, but rather that you prophesy." " We know in part, and we prophesy in part." (1 Cor. xiii. 9.) For it does not appear that Paul was only desirous in this passage to recount those admirable graces, by which Christ ennobled his gospel at the beginning ; but he rather gives a statement of ordinary gifts, which constantly remain in the church. Nor does

the objection seem sufficiently valid, that the apostle would have made this remark in vain to such characters as could not, by the Spirit of God, call Christ accursed. For since, in another passage (1 Cor. xiv. 32) he testifies that the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets, and orders the first speaker to be silent if any revelation has been made to the person sitting, he may here also admonish prophets in the church to conform their prophecies to the rule of faith, and not wander from the line of truth. By the expression *faith*, he means the first axioms of religion, and every doctrine not corresponding to these is thus proved to be false. There is less difficulty in the other clauses. Whoever is appointed a minister, let him perform his office by ministering; and let him not imagine that he is appointed to this honour on his own account, but for the sake of others; as if he had said, "let him perform his office by executing the duty of a minister properly, that he may answer to his title." Thus, also, when Paul afterwards recommends to teachers, under the name of teaching, solid edification, he means, "let every powerful teacher know that his object is the true instruction of the church, and let him only meditate on the means by which he may render the church more learned by his doctrine." For he is a teacher who forms and instructs the church by the word of truth; he is powerful in the word of exhortation, who considers that his object is to exhort with efficacy. However close an affinity and connexion these offices have with each other, they do not therefore cease to be various. None, indeed, can exhort without teaching, but a teacher is not immediately possessed with the power of exhorting. Now no prophet, or teacher, or exhorter can perform his office without ministering; but it is sufficient if we preserve the distinction which we observed in the gifts of God,

and know to be calculated for maintaining church order.

*He that giveth, with simplicity*—From these last clauses we see a clear proof of the legitimate use of God's gifts. By the words, *those who give*, Paul does not mean such as bestow any thing of their own possessions, but deacons, who preside in distributing the public property of the church. By the words, *those who show mercy*, he means widows and other ministers, who were appointed to take care of the sick, according to the custom of the ancient church. For there is a great difference between that function, which is employed in laying out what is necessary for the poor, and that office, which is devoted to their care and management. To the former he gives the character of *simplicity*, by which, without fraud or respect of persons, they may faithfully distribute what is intrusted to their care; to the latter he gives the advice of *showing mercy with cheerfulness*; that they may not by their moroseness, which frequently happens, diminish the kindness of their attention to the afflicted. For, as nothing affords more consolation to a patient, or to any child of distress, than the cheerfulness and alacrity of their attendants in affording assistance, so, on the other hand, the gloomy countenances of friends, servants, or nurses, seem to rebuke the sufferers. Although Paul by *rulers* properly means elders, to whom the government of the church was intrusted, who were appointed to preside, to rule, and watch over the moral conduct of the members of the church, yet it may be universally extended to every kind of ruler and governor. For no small care is required from those on whom the security of all devolves; no trifling assiduity is expected from such as have to devote their nights and days to the safety of the whole church. The period when our apostle wrote clearly proves that he did

not speak of certain civil rulers, for at that time there were no pious magistrates, but of elders appointed to act as censors of moral conduct.

9 *Let love be without dissimulation.* Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. 10 *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love;* in honour preferring one another. 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 *Rejoicing in hope;* patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 *Distributing to the necessity of saints;* given to hospitality.

*Let love*—Paul intending now to treat of particular duties, commences very properly with love, the bond of perfection. He enjoins a principle which is most necessary to be observed with respect to the commencement of this duty, namely, pure sincerity of mind, and the removal of all guile and pretence from the heart. For it is difficult to give a view of the ingenuity, with which a large portion of mankind assume the appearance of that love, which they really do not possess. For they not only deceive others, but impose upon themselves, while they endeavour to believe that they entertain a very considerable share of love, even for those whom they not only treat with neglect, but in reality renounce and despise. Paul, therefore, declares that only to be genuine love which is free from all dissimulation and guile; and every person can best judge for himself whether he entertains any feeling in the innermost recesses of his heart opposed to this noble and lasting affection. The words following in the context, *good* and *evil*, have not a general meaning; but by *evil* is intended that malicious iniquity which injures any person, and *good*, that kindness by which are afforded

to others aid and assistance. The antithesis very frequently occurs in Scripture, where vices are first prohibited, and virtues afterwards commended. I have neither followed Erasmus nor the ancient interpreter in translating the participle *hating*, for I think Paul wished to convey the idea of abhorrence as opposed, by antithesis, not merely to benevolence, but to the steadfast and warm attachment of a friend.

*By brotherly love*—He can find no words sufficiently strong for expressing the ardour of that affection with which we ought to embrace each other. For he calls it brotherly love, and uses a Greek word which signifies the mutual endearment that exists among relations. And this is, indeed, the character of the affection, which we ought to entertain for the sons of God. The following precept is very necessary for preserving benevolence,—that each in honour prefer his brother to himself. For no poison more efficaciously contributes to alienate the affections, than the idea of our being despised and treated with contempt. I do not altogether disapprove of the explanation, that *honour* means *every act of friendly kindness*; but the first interpretation, which confines it to *respect*, meets my approbation. For, as nothing is more opposed to brotherly concord than contempt arising from pride, by which a person exalts his own character, and treats others with indifference, neglect, or disdain; so modesty, by which due honour is paid to every one, nourishes and supports love with the longest continuance and greatest power.

*Not slothful in business*—This precept is given because the life of a Christian ongh not only to be active, but, neglecting what may contribute merely to our own advantage, we ought to devote our exertions to the promoting of the good of our brethren. Nor are we always to direct our attention to the vir-

tuous; but we must often use our utmost efforts for the most ungrateful and worthless. Finally, because most duties can be performed only by an entire forgetfulness of ourselves, we will never be properly prepared for our attendance on Christ, unless we urge ourselves forward to execute the office assigned us, and labour with diligence to shake off all slothfulness and indolence. Paul, by adding *fervent in spirit*, shows how we may gain this excellence. For the flesh, like the ass, is always torpid, and therefore requires goads, because it is the fervour of the spirit alone which corrects our sluggishness; and, on this account, earnestness in doing good requires a zeal and ardour, lighted up in our breasts by the Spirit of God. Why then, some may say, does Paul exhort us to this fervour? I answer, though it is the gift of God, yet the faithful are enjoined these duties that they may shake off all torpor, and fan the flame which is lighted up in their hearts from heaven; for it frequently happens that the impulse of the Spirit is suffocated and extinguished by our own fault. The third advice, *serving the time*, pertains also to the same subject. For, as our course of life is short, our opportunity for doing good soon passes away: and, on this account, we ought to hasten, with greater alacrity, for the performance of our duty. Thus Paul orders us, in another passage, “to redeem the time, because the days are evil.” It may also mean, that we should know how to suit ourselves to a favourable opportunity, for the instant seizing of a proper juncture for action is of very great importance. Paul, however, in this sentence, appears to me to oppose *serving the time* to habits of procrastination and loitering. Besides, as, in many ancient copies, this sentence is *serving the Lord*, although it may appear, at first view, foreign to the context, yet I dare not entirely

reject this reading. If it is approved, I doubt not but Paul wished to refer to the worship of God those kind offices and other actions, which we perform to our brethren, for the purposes of nourishing our love, as a means to increase the courage of the faithful.

*Rejoicing in hope*—These three are united together, and seem, in some measure, to relate to the former sentence, *serving the time*. For he best suits himself to time, and makes a proper use of the opportunity for pursuing his Christian course with vigour, who places his joy in the hope of a future life, and endures tribulations with patience. In whatever sense this passage may be understood,—for it does not make much difference whether you consider it to be joined with the preceding context, or separated from it,—Paul, in the first place, forbids us to rest on present blessings, and to fix our joy in earth and earthly things, as if our happiness were lodged there; but he orders us, secondly, to raise our minds to heaven, where we shall be made partakers of a solid and perfect joy. If our joy shall consist in the hope of a future life, we shall thence experience patience in adversity, because no sense of pain will be able to weigh down our heavenly joy. These two, therefore, are mutually joined together,—joy, which is conceived from the hope of future blessedness, and patience in adversity. For no child of Adam will submit to bear the cross with a placid and quiet mind, who has not learned to seek his happiness from a source wholly independent of the world, that he may mitigate and alleviate the bitterness of the cross, by the consolations which are inspired by the sure hope of an immortal crown. But since a patient enduring of the cross, and steady hopes of our heavenly crown, very much surpass our own strength, we ought to be instant in prayer, and

unceasingly supplicate God not to suffer our minds to faint, be dejected, or broken down, by any events in providence, even the most disagreeable and disastrous. Paul, also, not only excites us to prayer, but expressly requires perseverance; because our warfare is unceasing, and we are daily attacked by various assaults, which champions, even of the greatest bravery, are unable to support, without an occasional supply of new vigour. Unceasing continuance in prayer is the best remedy against fatigue.

*For the necessities of the saints*—Paul returns to the duties of charity, and the chief of these consists in performing acts of kindness to those destitute human beings from whom we expect to receive the least remuneration. Since, therefore, those are generally most treated with contempt, who are more oppressed with the load of poverty than others, and on this account require greater and more immediate assistance, because benefits conferred upon such indigence are considered to be entirely thrown away, the God of mercy commands these applicants to our care in a peculiar manner. For then, finally, we prove the sincerity of our love, when we assist our brethren, without having any other view than the exercise of our kindness. Now hospitality, namely, the benevolence and liberality which are shown to strangers, may justly be considered not the last kind of charity, because these objects of mercy are the most destitute of all, on account of their distance from relatives; and Paul, therefore, expressly recommends to us so important a duty. We see, therefore, that we ought to watch over every person with greater care, in proportion as he is generally more neglected by the rest of our fellow-men. Observe, also, the propriety of the expression, *communicating to the necessities of the saints*; and the apostle thus

intimates that we ought to supply the wants of our brethren with as much care, as if we were assisting ourselves. The apostle particularly commands us to assist the saints, for, although our charity ought to extend itself to the whole human race, yet we ought to embrace, with singular affection, those of the household of faith, who are bound to us by a still closer tie.

14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

*Bless*—I am desirous to make, once for all, this remark to the reader,—not to seek, with too much exactness, for a certain order in particular precepts, but to rest satisfied with having a few brief exhortations interspersed in this part of the epistle for forming the whole course of our life to piety and virtue; and these, too, derived from the principle in the beginning of the chapter. He will immediately give us precepts against retaliating injuries inflicted upon us by others. In this passage, Paul requires a train of conduct yet more difficult, not to pray for evil and curses to light on the heads of our enemies, but to wish them every kind of prosperity, and supplicate God to grant them every blessing, however much they may harass, and treat us with the most barbarous inhumanity. We ought to labour after the attainment of this mildness with the more intense diligence, in proportion to the difficulty of its attainment. For our heavenly Father gives no command, which he does not require us to obey. Nor

is any excuse to be admitted, if we do not attain that feeling and disposition, by which God wishes us to be distinguished from wicked and worldly characters. I grant it is difficult, and entirely contrary to human nature; but there is no duty, however arduous, which cannot be performed by the powerful aid of God; nor will he ever withhold his divine grace, provided we do not neglect to pray for it with ardent and incessant supplication. And though you can scarcely find one, who has made such distinguished advancement in the divine law, as fully to perform that commandment; yet none can boast himself to be a son of God, or glory in the name of a Christian, who has not in part put on this mind, which was in the Lord Jesus, and does not daily wrestle against and oppose the feeling of enmity and hatred. Prayer for our enemies is more difficult than to refrain from the active revenging of an injury which we have suffered. For there are some characters, who, notwithstanding they hold their hands from violence, and are not driven on by a desire of injuring their enemies, would still be glad to find destruction or loss befall them from another quarter. Even if the injured are so much appeased as to wish no evil to their foes, yet scarce one in a hundred desires the safety and prosperity of the injurer; a large portion of mankind has immediate recourse, without feeling any shame, to horrid imprecations. But God, by his word, not only restrains our hands from any act of violence and injury, but also subdues all bitter feelings in our minds. Nay, he even desires us to be solicitous for the eternal salvation of those, who bring ruin on themselves by cruelly harassing us in an unjust manner. Erasmus was mistaken in the word *bless*, for he did not observe that it was opposed to railing and curses. For Paul wishes God to be a witness of our patience, that we may not

only bridle, in the first place, the violence of anger and indignation in our curses, but, by urgently praying for the forgiveness of our enemies, may prove our sorrow for the state and condition of such foes, as cause their own voluntary destruction.

*Rejoice with them that do rejoice*—This general exhortation is here very properly introduced—“that believers may embrace each other with mutual affection, and participate together in the common events allotted them by Providence.” In the first place, however, Paul enumerates the parts or kinds of our duty, namely, *to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*. For such is the nature of true and genuine Christian love, that it would rather grieve with a brother, when weighed down with the load of poverty and affliction, than turn aside from the wailings of sorrow, or disregard, in the midst of its own delicacies, its own ease, or its own security, the moanings of distress. It is, in fine, our duty to accommodate each other as far as we possibly can, and in every circumstance of life to cultivate a reciprocal fellow-feeling, whether we have to condole with our brother in the cold blasts of adversity, or rejoice with him when basking in the sunshine of prosperity. Envy alone prevents us from rejoicing with a brother in his happiness, and the most barbarous inhumanity from sorrowing with him in his distress. Let us, therefore, cultivate that sympathy with each other, which may make us at the same time mutually harmonize in all our affections.

*Not thinking, &c.*—The Greek preserves the anti-thesis more completely. *Not thinking of high things*, by which he means that a Christian ought not to aspire in an ambitious manner after those things, by which he may surpass others, nor indulge haughty feelings, but meditate rather upon modesty and

meekness, for our excellence, in the presence of God, consists in these virtues, not in pride, or the contempt of our brethren. This precept is properly added to the former, for nothing breaks the unity mentioned by the apostle more completely than the exalting of ourselves, and our aspiring to something still more elevated, with a view to attain a higher situation. I take the word *humble* in the neuter gender, that the antithesis may be more complete. Every feeling of ambition, therefore, and every elation of mind, which insinuate themselves under the name magnanimity, are here condemned by Paul; because moderation, or rather submission, is the chief virtue of the faithful, which is distinguished by readily yielding an honour to another, and not depriving him of his proper glory. The sentence, *Be not wise in your own conceits*, connects with the preceding part of the context; for nothing inflates the mind more than a high opinion of our own wisdom and prudence. He is desirous, therefore, that we relinquish this, listen to the opinions of others, and yield to their counsels. For the translation, *arrogant*, adopted by Erasmus, is forced and unmeaning, because Paul would, in this case, repeat the same idea twice, without additional emphasis. We ought also ever to remember that one of the best remedies of arrogance is not to entertain too high an opinion of our own wisdom.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

*Recompense to no man evil*—This prohibition differs almost nothing from the following one in the nineteenth verse, except that vengeance implies something more violent than that kind of compensating evil, which is treated of in this passage. For we sometimes render evil for evil, even when we do not demand retaliation; as, if we treat those maliciously from whom we receive no act of kindness. For we are accustomed to value the merits of every one towards us, or at least their claims of meriting any thing at our hands, that we may bestow our kind offices on those, from whom we have either already received an obligation, or expect some future favour. Again, if any one denies us succour in our need, by paying him, according to the proverb, in his own coin, when our aid is required, we shall afford him no more assistance than we have received. There are also other examples of the same kind, by which evil is returned for evil without manifest revenge.

*Provide things honest*—I do not object to Erasmus's translation, *preparing in a provident manner*, but I prefer a literal translation. Because, although every one is intent upon his own advantage, with an eagerness surpassing the bounds of equity, or is cautious in avoiding losses, yet Paul seems to require a care and attention altogether different. The whole amount of his observations is, “that we should use our utmost exertions to edify all by our probity.” For, as it is necessary for us to enjoy innocence of conscience before God, so we ought to have a character distinguished for integrity among men. For if God ought to be glorified by our good works, he is deprived of this glory when men behold nothing in us worthy of praise. Nor is the glory of God only obscured, but he is dishonoured; for all our sins are brought forward by

the ignorant to the disgrace of the gospel. But, when we are ordered to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*, we must regard the design and end. Our design is not to secure the regard and praises of our fellow-men ; for Christ warns us, with much earnestness, against such a design, when he orders us to exclude men from beholding our good deeds, and to admit God only as a witness. But our object is to make men direct their attention to God, and praise him, that they may be roused by our example to the diligent pursuit of justice, and be allure<sup>d</sup>, by the amiableness and excellence of our life and conversation, to the love of God. If we are defamed on account of the name of Christ, we do not cease to *provide things honest* among our fellow-men ; but the passage of Corinthians, as lying, and yet true, (2 Cor. vi. 9,) is fulfilled in our case.

*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you*—Calmness, and hence a composed manner of living, which renders us amiable to all, are no common endowments of a Christian. If we are desirous to pursue this, we ought not only to be endowed with the greatest equity, but the highest courteousness and easiness of manners, which may not only gain the affections of the just and good, but influence the minds of the wicked : for a caution is necessary in this instance, not so to affect the securing of the favour and esteem of men, as to refuse to incur, for the sake of Christ, the hatred of any human being when necessary. Yet we observe some, who, while they are worthy of being loved by all on account of the sweetness of their manners, and the tranquillity of their minds, yet are hated on account of the gospel even by their nearest relations. Easiness of disposition must not degenerate into flattery, lest from our zeal to keep peace, we soothe the vices of our fellow-men. Since, therefore, we cannot invariably expect to secure

peace with all, Paul has added two sentences as exceptions, *if it be possible*, and *as much as lieth in you*. We must resolve that, according to the duties required by piety and love, we ought never to violate peace unless compelled by one or other of these two causes : for we ought to endure many things with an earnest desire for peace ; to forgive offences, and kindly to remit the utmost rigour of justice, that we may be always courageous, as often as necessity requires, to carry on our Christian warfare with keenness and vigour : for the friends of Jesus cannot possibly enjoy eternal peace with the world, which is under the dominion of Satan.

*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves*—The evil here corrected, as hinted above, is greater than the former already stated ; yet both spring from the same source, namely, an immoderate love of ourselves, and innate pride, which make us indulgent to our own vices, while we are inexorable to those of others. Since, therefore, this disease generally produces in all a furious desire for vengeance, when we are in the least touched, Paul here commands us not to attempt to revenge ourselves, but to give it into the hands of the Lord. And because such as have been once seized with this unruly passion cannot easily be curbed, he uses a kind expression to retain us in the performance of our duty by calling us *beloved*. The precept is, neither to avenge nor to desire to avenge any injuries which we have received ; and the reason is added, because *we must give place unto wrath*. We mean, by *giring place unto wrath*, to grant the Lord the power of judging, and he is deprived of this by all self-avengers. If, therefore, it is criminal to usurp the place of God, we are not allowed to revenge ourselves, because we anticipate the judgment of the Most Holy, who has expressed it to be his will to preserve for himself the

execution of this office. At the same time it is intimated that God will avenge those who patiently wait for his assistance ; and, such as pre-occupy this office, leave no room for his aid and succour. Not only does Paul prohibit us from executing vengeance with our own power, but we are not to indulge such a desire in our hearts ; and on this ground any distinction between private and public vengeance is altogether vain and frivolous ; for that person is no more to be excused, who implores the aid of the magistrate with a malevolent intention, and a determined resolution to revenge, than we can acquit the voluntary contriver of plans for self-revenge ; nay, we ought not always to ask God, as will afterwards appear, to avenge us ; for if our requests for this purpose arise from private affection and passion, and not from the pure zeal of the spirit, we do not make God our judge, but a servant of our depraved desires. We are not therefore to give place to wrath in any other way than by patiently waiting for the proper season for deliverance, wishing and praying, in the mean time, that such as now vex and disquiet us may become our friends by repentance. *For it is written, Vengeance is mine.* He adduces his proof from the Song of Moses, (Deut. xxxii. 35,) where the Lord threatens to avenge his enemies ; and all God's enemies are such as torment his servants without any cause. "He who touches you," he says, "touches the apple of mine eye." Let us therefore rest content with this consolation, that such as cause us uneasiness when we do not deserve it, will not escape unpunished, nor will we, by suffering, make ourselves more liable to the injuries of the wicked, but rather will afford opportunity to the Lord, our only avenger and deliverer, to grant us assistance. We ought not, indeed, to supplicate God to avenge our enemies, but

should pray for their conversion, that they may become our friends ; and if they pursue their wicked career, they will experience the same judgment, which other despisers of God may expect. Nor does Paul cite this testimony, as if we might indulge in anger immediately after we have been injured, and, according to the natural desire of the flesh, to pray to God to avenge our injuries. But, in the first place, he teaches us that it is not our duty to demand vengeance, unless we wish to arrogate to ourselves the part belonging to the Fountain of all justice. He secondly intimates that we have no cause to fear the insulting ferocity of the wicked, if they see us bearing their treatment with patience, because God does not assume to himself, without effect, the office of revenging our cause.

20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

*Therefore if thine enemy hunger*—He now shows how we may truly perform the precepts against revenge, and against the recompensing of evil, namely, by not only refraining from the infliction of any injury, but also by performing acts of kindness to those who have shown us such treatment. For it is a certain kind of indirect retaliation on our parts when we prevent those who have injured us from receiving a kindness. We must understand all kinds of good offices to be implied by the expression, *meat and drink*. “ To the greatest extent of your power, and in every transaction, assist your enemy either by riches, or counsel, or labour.” He does not confine

the term *enemy* to those who are hated by us, but includes also such as are engaged against us in actual strife and variance ; and if they are to be assisted by acts of kindness, with respect to wants of a temporal nature, surely their eternal salvation ought never to be opposed by our imprecations. *Heap coals of fire*—Paul shows the advantages we may derive from performing offices of humanity to our enemies, since we do not willingly throw away both our cost and pains. Some interpret *coals* to mean the destruction heaped upon the head of an enemy, if we treat the unworthy with kindness, and conduct ourselves very differently from what they deserved at our hands, since we will thus double the guilt of our enemy. Others understand, by this expression, that such kind treatment will excite mutual love in the breast of our adversary. I take it in a more simple sense, “that his mind will be broken by one of two ways ; for our enemy will either be softened by kindnesses, or, if his atrocious disposition is not made more mild, he will be grieved and troubled from the testimony of his conscience, feeling itself confounded and overwhelmed with our goodness.”

*Be not overcome of evil*—This precept seems to be given for the purpose of confirming his position. We have to contend with the most perverse dispositions : if we endeavour to retaliate, we confess ourselves to be conquered ; if, on the contrary, we render good for evil, we display by such conduct an invincible constancy of mind ; and this is truly the most beautiful and glorious kind of victory ; and its advantage is not only imagined, but in reality felt, since the Lord grants the most desirable success, that can be conceived, to their patience. On the contrary, whoever shall endeavour to overcome evil by evil, will perhaps by his wickedness overcome

his enemy, but it will be to his own ruin ; for by pursuing such a line of conduct, he is fighting under the banners of Satan.\*

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### CHAPTER XIII.

1 LET every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever

\* There is not, perhaps, any commentator, either of ancient or modern times, who has given a more just, ennobling, and truly exalted view of the forgiveness of injuries, and the love of enemies, than our distinguished reformer, in his notes upon the last part of this chapter. Nor did Calvin write what he did not practise ; for he was, at the very time when he composed these notes, at Strasburgh, whither he had been most unjustly and ungratefully banished by some of the most vile and worthless of men. Yet during the whole time of his banishment he was incessantly active in doing every thing in his power, both of a temporal and spiritual nature, for the good of his bitterest and most malignant enemies. He wrote a very admirable reply to a work of Sadolet, one of the ablest and most virtuous of the Roman Catholics, which was designed to re-convert the inhabitants of Geneva to the Church of Rome. Although he enjoyed at Strasburgh all the blessings of friendship—all the honours of learning—all the affection of a devoted Christian congregation to their pastor, and all the delight of training up a rising generation of ministers of the gospel by his lectures on divinity, he still continued to exemplify, in his whole conduct towards his implacable enemies, those glorious precepts of our Saviour and of Paul, which relate to the love of our most inveterate foes. He finally also experienced that *vengeance is the Lvr'd's*, and returned in triumph to resume his labours in Geneva, with increasing exertions, and fresh laurels ; and a nobler example of the invaluable advantage of loving our enemies—of praying for them, and doing them good for evil,—above all, of labouring for their conversion, is not to be met with in the personal history of any Christian since the days of the apostles.

therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

*Let every soul, &c.*—The diligence and accuracy with which Paul treats the subject of obedience to rulers, in his instructions concerning the life and moral conduct of a Christian, evidently proves him to have been compelled to it by some urgent necessity; and this, since it is invariably connected with the preaching of the gospel, could be pointed out with the greatest advantage during the first age of the church. For there always exist rebellious spirits, who believe that the kingdom of Christ can only attain its proper exaltation and supremacy by the abolition of all earthly dominions, and that the liberty, which Christ has purchased for them, can only be enjoyed when they have shaken off every yoke of human slavery. The Jewish converts, however, were more under the influence of this error than any other nation, because they regarded it as very disreputable for Abraham's descendants, whose kingdom had been in a most flourishing state before the coming of the Redeemer, to continue in bondage after his appearing. Another circumstance also alienated the Jews, as well as the gentiles, from their rulers, because governors then not merely hated piety, but persecuted religion with the most hostile disposition. Believers considered it, therefore, absurd to acknowledge those as lawful masters and princes, who were contriving to wrest and to take away the kingdom by force from Christ, the only Lord of heaven and earth. These reasons, in all probability, induced Paul to confirm the power of the magistrates with more earnest care and diligence. In the first place, Paul lays down a general precept, which comprehends the sum of what he

intended to say; in the second part, he subjoins such circumstances as are calculated to explain and prove the precept. He denominates those *higher powers* not *supreme*, because they exceed the rest of their fellow-men, though they had not obtained the highest authorities. They are denominated *magistrates*, on account of their relation to those who were subject to their command, and not from any comparative superiority which existed between the different governors themselves. In my opinion, the great object of the apostle, in adopting this expression, was to remove the frivolous curiosity of those who frequently propose the question by what right rulers have attained their power, while we ought to rest satisfied with the dignity of their station. For they had not acquired this rank by their own virtue, but had ascended their distinguished eminence by the hand of the Lord. Paul removes, by mentioning *every soul*, all kinds of exception, so that none can claim an immunity from a common obedience. *For there is no power but of God*—Our subjection to magistrates ought to rest upon their appointment by the divine administration; and if it is the will of God to govern the world in this manner, the despisers of power endeavour to invert the divine order, and resist, therefore, God himself; since to contemn the providence of the Author of political right and power is to wage war with Omnipotence. It ought, moreover, to be understood, that the powers of magistrates are from God; not as the pestilence, and famine, and war, and other punishments of sinners are said to be from him, but because he has appointed them for the lawful and right government of the world. For although tyrannies, unjust despots, and usurpations, being full of anarchy, are not to be considered as regular governments, yet the very right of empire and of dominion is appointed

by God for the safety of the human race. Since, therefore, rulers are allowed to protect from war, and to seek remedies for injuries and mischiefs, the apostle commands us freely, and of our own accord, to regard, reverence, and honour the power and dominion of magistrates, as useful for mankind. For the punishments inflicted by God upon the sins of men are not properly denominated administrations ; but those means are so called, which are expressly appointed by the great Ruler of the world for the preservation of legitimate order.

*But they that resist*—Paul threatens punishment to all those who oppose the providence of God in this matter, because none can resist Omnipotence but to his own ruin. We ought, therefore, to act with great caution, that we may not rush upon this divine threatening. Nor do I confine the meaning of the word *damnation* to that punishment only which is inflicted by magistrates, as if the design of the apostle was to show that rebels against authority will be punished according to law, but every kind of divine vengeance, in whatever manner it may be exacted ; for he, in general, teaches us what end awaits those who enter into a contest with God.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same : 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

*For rulers*—He now commends to us the honouring of princes on account of their usefulness. The

illative particle, *for*, must, therefore, be referred to the first proposition, not the following sentence. The Lord was desirous, by establishing magistrates, to provide for the tranquillity of the good, and to check and restrain the frowardness of the bad ; and the safety of the human race is preserved by these means ; for unless the fury of the wicked is opposed, and protection afforded to the innocent from the unbridled passions and desires of the disobedient, all society will immediately be involved in one common ruin. If this is, therefore, the only remedy, by which the human race can be defended and saved from destruction, we ought to protect it with great diligence, unless we are willing to avow ourselves the public enemies of the human race. The additional remark, *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good*, intimates, we have no ground for abhorring magistrates, if we spend a life of virtue ; nay, any person, by the very desire to shake off or remove the yoke from himself, affords a tacit proof of a wicked conscience engaged in plotting some evil. Paul here speaks of the true and genuine duty of a magistrate ; and notwithstanding many rulers frequently degenerate from this character, we ought always to show them the obedience due to governors. For if a bad prince is the scourge of the Lord for the purpose of punishing the people's sins, we ought to consider our vices to be the cause why this great blessing of the Lord is changed to be our curse. Let us never cease, therefore, to stand in awe of this good appointment or ordinance of God ; and this we shall easily accomplish, if we impute all the evil to be found in it to ourselves. We here see God's design in the appointment or establishing of magistrates ; and its effects would always appear, if so excellent and valuable an institution were not corrupted by our own faults. Be-

sides, princes never so much abuse their power, by harassing the virtuous and the innocent, as not to retain in their despotic rule some semblance of just government; no tyranny, therefore, can exist, which is not in some measure of use in affording protection to human society. Paul has also distinguished two parts, considered by philosophers to constitute the well-ordered government of a state, namely, the rewards bestowed on good men, and the punishments inflicted upon the wicked. The word *praise*, according to the Hebrew idiom, is taken in an extensive sense.

*For he is a minister of God to thee for good—* Magistrates may hence learn the nature of their own calling; for they do not exercise dominion on their own account, but for the public good; nor is their power unbridled, but restricted to the welfare of others; in fine, they are under an engagement, in the execution of their sovereignty, both to God and man; for, as God's ambassadors and transactors of his affairs, they must necessarily render him an account; besides, the very ministry intrusted to them has a regard to their subjects, to whom on this account they are debtors. Private men are admonished that the divine kindness protects them, by the sword of princes, against the injuries of the wicked. *For he beareth not the sword in vain—* Another part of the office of rulers consists in restraining by force the unruly inclinations of the wicked towards the commission of vice, when, of their own accord, they do not suffer themselves to be governed by laws; and magistrates inflict upon their crimes those punishments which the judgments of God demand; for he expressly declares that they are armed with the sword, not merely for vain show, but for the punishment of evil doers. An *avenger to execute wrath*, implies the same meaning as an executor of God's

indignation. The use of the sword, which is put into their hands by the Lord, proves the truth of this position. A striking passage for establishing the power of the sword, because, if the Lord, when the sword was intrusted by him to the magistrate, also ordered the rulers to use it, he obeys the commands of the Governor of the world, as often as he inflicts capital punishment on the wicked, by exercising the vengeance of God. All those who consider it a wicked act to shed the blood of the guilty, contend with the power of God himself.\*

5 Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For, for this cause pay ye tribute also : for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues : tribute to whom tribute *is due* ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour.

*Wherefore ye must needs be subject*—Paul now repeats the command, given in the commencement,

\* Every candid and unprejudiced inquirer into the cause of the death of Servetus, must feel convinced, with Mosheim, who was no friend of Calvin, that if our distinguished reformer had not extended the *power* of the *civil magistrate* to the punishment of *blasphemy* against the *Ruler of the universe*, his character would never have been attacked as the burner of Servetus, by Grotius, who forgets the truth of biography, since our reformer was opposed to fire and fagot.

May every king and every governor learn, from the error and the sin of Calvin, to avoid persecution on account of religious opinions ; and may every friend of the meek and lowly Jesus promote the interest of the gospel by the only legitimate weapons,—a love of truth, and an earnest desire of the salvation of mankind.—*Translator.*

concerning obedience to magistrates, as an inference, with this illustration and improvement, that they must be obeyed, both on account of the necessity imposed by man, and in compliance with God. He mentioned *wrath*; for the vengeance which magistrates can demand, on account of the contempt shown their dignity, implies that we must not yield them obedience, because we may not be permitted to resist with impunity men armed and in power, as we generally endure injuries which we have no means of repulsing; but our submission must be voluntarily undergone, and our conscience is obligated to the performance of this duty by the word of God. If, therefore, we had it in our power to provoke and despise with impunity a magistrate, when unarmed, we are no more allowed to attempt it, than if we perceived the punishment immediately hanging over our heads: for it is not the duty of a private man to refuse obedience to a magistrate put in authority over us by the Lord. The whole of this discussion and inquiry relates to civil government. Those, therefore, who exercise dominion over the conscience, endeavour without effect to establish, by this text, their sacrilegious tyranny.\*

*For, for this cause pay ye tribute also*—He deduces, on this occasion, where he makes mention of tributes, the reason for their being established from the very office of magistrates. For, if their duty is to defend and preserve uninjured the tranquillity of the virtuous, and to oppose themselves to the aban-

\* This passage clearly proves that Calvin, had he *then* understood the *power* of the *civil magistrate*, would never have commenced or sanctioned the *TRIAL* of Servetus. May the *divines* and *governors* of the *nineteenth century* learn to avoid the most *distant* appearance, either *directly* or *INDIRECTLY*, either *in or out of establishments*, of *persecution* for the sake of *conscience*.—*Translator.*

doned attempts of the wicked, such an object can only be accomplished when they are aided by power and firm protection. Tributes, therefore, are paid by law, for supporting such necessary expenses. But this is not a proper place for entering upon a more full discussion concerning the manner of collecting and using taxes or tributes; nor is it our duty either to prescribe to princes how much they ought to expend for individual purposes, or to call them to account. It becomes governors, at the same time, to remember all their possessions from the people are to be regarded as a public benefit, not an instrument of inordinate desire and luxury. For we see the purposes on account of which tributes, when paid, must be used according to Paul, namely, that kings may be supplied with assistance for the defence of their subjects.

*Render therefore to all their dues*—The apostle appears to intend to give here a comprehensive summary of the duties owing by subjects to their rulers, namely, to regard and honour them; to obey their edicts, laws, and sentences, and to pay tributes and taxes. Obedience is intended by the word *fear*; customs, excise, and all other imposts, are included under the expressions, *taxes* and *tributes*. This passage confirms what he mentioned before, that kings and other rulers deserve to be obeyed, not from compulsion, but because obedience is pleasing to God, for he does not wish them to be feared, but reverenced with voluntary esteem and honour.\*

\* Bishop Horsley's masterly defence of Calvin against the uncandid and unfair attempts which have been made to prove him inimical to all civil governments, except republics, merits the careful attention of all who wish to be better acquainted with the opinions of our reformer on this important subject. Calvin was not friendly to immense empires, from a conviction that they are generally despotic; but on all occasions he

8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another : for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet ; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour : therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

*Owe no man any thing*—Some consider this to be taken ironically, as if Paul answered the objection of those, who contended that Christians were burdened by enjoining them any other precepts than those of love. I do not deny that it may be taken in the following ironical sense :—“ I accede to the demand of such, as admit only the law of love.” I prefer, however, understanding it in a simple sense ; for I think Paul wished to refer the precept concerning the power of the magistrates to the law of love, that none might consider it weak, as if he had said, “ When I request your obedience to magistrates, I require only what all Christians ought to perform, according to the law of love. For if you are desirous for virtuous men to prosper, (and not to desire this would be contrary to the feelings of humanity,) you ought to study, and zealously to labour to give validity to the laws and statutes, that the people may be obedient to the guardians and protectors of the laws, by whose blessing and favour the tranquil-

inculcates obedience to civil governors with the same Christian spirit that distinguishes his notes on this chapter.—*Translator.*

lity of all is secured. Charity, therefore, is violated by the introducers of anarchy, which is immediately followed by the confusion and disturbance of all establishments." *For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law*—Paul's plan is to reduce all the commands of the law to love, that we may be assured of our obedience to the commands being conducted in a proper manner when love is maintained; and we should be prepared to undergo any burden, by which the law of charity may be preserved entire and unbroken. The precepts already given concerning obedience to magistrates, in which no small part of love consists, are thus strongly confirmed by Paul. Some feel a difficulty in this passage, which they cannot easily solve, because the love of our neighbour is taught by Paul to be the fulfilling of the law,—since no mention is in this case made of the love of God, which ought on no account to be omitted. Paul, however, is not considering the whole law, but only our duties towards our neighbours. It is indeed true that the whole law is fulfilled when we love our neighbour, for true love to men springs only from a love to God, and is an evidence and effect of this excellent grace. Paul's inquiry here relates only to the second table, and his observations are confined to it alone, as if he had said, The person who loves his neighbour as himself has discharged his duty to the whole world. The cavil of those sophists, who endeavour to prove justification by works from this passage, is truly nugatory and impertinent, vain and trifling. For Paul is not speaking here of man's ability to perform the law, or not, but states a condition which is nowhere fulfilled and obeyed. We do not deny the observance of the law to be true righteousness, when it is said men are not justified by works; but since none

either have performed the law, or can do it, we say all are excluded from salvation by its obedience, and our only refuge is in the grace of Christ.

*For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery*—We cannot hence infer what precepts are contained in the second table, since he subjoins in the conclusion, *and if there is any other precept*. It may appear absurd for Paul to omit the precept concerning the honour due to parents, which had the greatest reference to the subject in hand. May not the apostle have observed this silence for the very purpose of not obscuring his argument? and, though I dare not assert this, yet I find nothing wanting to complete his object, that, if God's whole design by his precepts was only to instruct us in the duty of love, we ought to use every exertion by which this might be obtained. Every enemy of contention must readily grant, that Paul, by such passages as this, was desirous to prove that the whole tendency of the law is to induce us to cultivate mutual love with each other; and we must, therefore, supply what he passed over in silence, that obedience towards magistrates is not one of the least important parts of a duty, by which peace is cherished, and brotherly love preserved.

*Love worketh no ill to his neighbour*—He proves from the effect that love contains every thing delivered in the commandments, since every one, influenced by true love, will never think of injuring his neighbour. For what else does the whole law forbid, than our doing no injury to our neighbour? We ought also to adapt this to the present purpose of the apostle; for, since magistrates are the guardians of peace and equity, every one desirous to preserve the right of each individual in the state inviolate, and to protect the lives of all from injury, must defend, to the utmost of his power, the rank of magis-

trates. The enemies indeed of Government display their desire for doing injury. His repetition of the passage, *love is the fulfilling of the law*, must, as before, be understood to relate to that part which regards human society, for no allusion is here made to the first table of the law, which is wholly devoted to the worship of God.

11 And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

*And that*—He now enters upon another subject of exhortation, for since the rays of heavenly light have now begun to shine upon us towards the dawn of day, we ought to imitate the conduct of those, who are employed in the midst of light, and in the presence of their fellow-men. For they take diligent care not to perpetrate any base or dishonourable action, since they are assured, by committing any kind of offence, they will be exposed to the observation of too great a number of witnesses. But it much more becomes us, who always stand in the presence of God and of angels, and are invited by Christ, the true Sun of Righteousness, to behold himself, to avoid every kind of shameful conduct. The sum of the whole amounts to this: “Since a proper season, as we well

know, has now arrived for our rising from sleep, let us cast away every thing pertaining to the night ; let us shake off all the works of darkness, because darkness itself is already dispersed ; and, devoting ourselves to the works of light, let us walk as we ought to do in the day.” The intervening part of the sentence, *for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed*, ought to be enclosed in a parenthesis. As this is an allegory, we will carefully examine the meaning of each part. Paul means, by *night*, ignorance of God ; and all, who are kept in it, wander, and sleep as in the night ; for unbelievers suffer from blindness and stupidity ; and this last is indicated by sleep, which is the image, as the apostle says, of death. The revelation of divine truth, by which Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, rises upon us, is termed *light*. *Rising* means, to be girt and prepared for the performance of those offices of obedience, which the Lord requires from us believers. *Works of darkness* indicate base and flagitious actions, because *night*, according to the apostle, is free from a sense of shame. *The armour of light* implies, honourable, sober, and chaste actions, to which the day is usually devoted ; and *arms* are mentioned rather than *works*, because we must serve as soldiers under the Lord. The sentence, *and that*, at the beginning, must be read by itself ; for it depends upon the former doctrine, and means, “ Besides what has been already mentioned.” Paul says, the time is known to the faithful, because the vocation of God, and the day of visitation require newness of life and manners, as he afterwards, by way of explanation, makes it to be the hour of rising. The Greek word for *time*, signifies *occasion*, or *opportunity*. *For now is our salvation nearer*—This passage is variously tortured by interpreters. Many refer the word *believing* to the time of the law ; as if Paul had said, the Jews

had believed before Christ appeared, which I reject as harsh and strained ; and it would be absurd to restrict a general doctrine to a small part of the church. How few of the whole church, to which he wrote, were Jews ! This language would not suit the Romans. The comparison of the *day* and *night*, in my opinion, removes this difficulty. The sentence, *our salvation is now nearer than when we began to believe*, refers to the time preceding their faith. For since the adverb admits of a doubtful signification, this, as appears from the following remarks, is a much more proper sense of the passage.

*The night is far spent, the day is at hand*—This is the occasion mentioned. For, although the faithful were not now received into the full light of day, yet he justly compares our knowledge of a future life, which shines upon us by the gospel, to the dawn of day. For this *day* is not taken, as in other places, for the light of faith, in which case he would not have said that it approached, but it was actually present, nay, was even now shining as in the midst of its progress ; but relates to the happy splendour of the heavenly life, whose commencement is now discovered by the gospel. To recapitulate the whole : “ We ought, from the very moment when God begins to call us, to direct our attention to the coming of Christ, as from the first rising of the day, we infer the full light of the sun to be at no great distance.” He says, *the night is far spent*, because we are not buried in thick darkness, as unbelievers, to whom not a single spark of light and life appears ; but the hope of resurrection is placed before us by the gospel. Nay, the light of faith, whence we obtain a knowledge of the near approach of the full splendour of heavenly glory, ought to rouse our exertions, and prevent us from being torpid in our earthly career. But a little after, where he orders us to

*walk in light, as during the day,* he does not continue the same metaphor, because he compares our present state, in which Christ shines upon us, to the day. But he was desirous to encourage us by various ways ; by meditating, at one period, on our future life ; and reverencing, at another, the presence of the light of God.

*Not in rioting*—Paul hath here mentioned three kinds of vices, each of which he has distinguished by two names, *intemperance* and *luxury*, in our manner of living ; *venereal desire* and its consequence, *impure conduct* ; *envy* ; and *contention*. If these actions are attended with so much disgrace, that even carnal men are ashamed to perpetrate them in the presence of mankind, we, who walk in the light of God, ought to refrain from them when we are withdrawn from the sight of all observers. Although *strife* precedes *envying*, in the third class of vices mentioned by Paul, he undoubtedly intended to teach us that contention and dispute flow from *envy*, since every person, anxious to attain great eminence, feels envy towards others. Ambition is the cause of both these sins.

*But put ye on the Lord Jesus*—This metaphor, taken from our apparel, which is calculated either to adorn or disfigure us, frequently occurs in Scripture. A dirty and torn garment disgraces its wearer, while a clean and beautiful one secures him additional regard and esteem. To *put on Christ*, means, our being surrounded and protected in every part by the virtue of his Spirit, and thus rendered fit for the performance of every duty of holiness. For the image of God, which is the only ornament of the soul, is thus renewed in us. For Paul regards the end and design of our calling ; since God, by adoption, engrafts us into the body of his only-begotten Son, on condition that we renounce our former man-

ner of life, and become new men in Christ Jesus. Hence the apostle says, in another passage, (Gal. iii. 27,) that believers *put on Christ* in baptism. *Make not provision for the flesh*—While we carry about with us our flesh, we cannot entirely neglect it, for our conversation in heaven is accompanied with our earthly pilgrimage. We must, therefore, so take care of all things pertaining to the body as to use them for affording help in our journey, without making us lose sight of our heavenly country. Heathens themselves say, “The demands of nature are few, the appetites of man are insatiable.” Whoever, therefore, labours to gratify the desires of the flesh, must not only fall into a state of dissipation, but be overwhelmed in the very depths and abyss of profligacy. While Paul instructs us to curb our desires, he assigns our want of contentment with the sober and legitimate use of what we possess as the cause of all intemperance. By merely supplying, therefore, the wants and necessities of our flesh, and not our carnal lusts, we shall use the present world without abusing it.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

1 HIM that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but not* to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.

*Him that is weak*—He now passes on to a precept, very necessary for the instruction of the church, that such as have made greater progress in Christian doctrine should suit themselves to the more ignorant, and bestow all their own strength for supporting the weakness of the inexperienced. For there are some of God's people weaker than others, and, if they are not treated with great tenderness and clemency, they become dispirited, and are at length estranged from religion. It is probable this occurred in a very great degree in the first age of the gospel; for the churches were formed by a mixture of Jews and gentiles, some of whom had been so long accustomed to observe the ritual of the law of Moses, and instructed in it from their infancy, as not easily to relinquish an adherence to its ceremonies. The rest, who had never been taught it, avoided the unaccustomed yoke. But since men are readily inclined, from a variety of opinions, to involve themselves in disputes and controversies, the apostle shows how men of such various sentiments may continue in the church without disagreement. He orders it as the best method, for the more strong to labour in assisting the weak, and for such as have made greater progress to bear with the ignorant. For God does not confer on us greater strength than others for enabling us to oppress the weak, nor is it the duty of Christian wisdom to become insolent beyond measure, and to despise others. In this way, therefore, he directs his conversation to such as have acquired more skill, experience, and firmness, who are more powerfully obligated to assist their neighbours, on account of their enjoying greater degrees of grace.  
*Not to doubtful disputations*—A word is wanting to complete the sense, which can signify nothing else, than that the weak should not be harassed with troublesome disputes. We ought to keep in mind

the hypothesis now under the consideration of the apostle ; for, since many of the Jews still adhered to the shadows of the law, he confesses they were faulty in doing so, but requires pardon to be shown them for a short time, because, by pressing them with more severity, their faith would only be undermined. He denominates those disputationes *doubtful*, which disturb the mind, not yet sufficiently settled, or involve it in doubts. We may, however, extend this farther, namely, to all the thorny, slippery, crabbed questions, which disquiet and disturb weak consciences without edification. We must, therefore, consider what questions each is able to receive, and suit our doctrines to their capacities.

*For one believes*—I do not understand what Erasmus has followed in the various reading he has used, for the sentence, which is entire in the original, is mutilated by his translation ; and instead of using the relative article, he improperly adopts the following version, “Another indeed believes.” There is nothing harsh or strained in taking the infinitive for the imperative, as Paul frequently adopts this structure. He calls those believers, who are fully persuaded in their conscience, and allows them an indifferent use of every thing. The *weak*, however, only eats herbs, and abstains from the use of such articles of food as he considers to be prohibited. If the common reading is more approved, the meaning will be, that it is unfair for him, who freely eats all things, to try such as are tender and weak by the same rule. For it is absurd to understand, by *weak*, those who are sick.

*Let not him that eateth*—The apostle meets both these defects in a prudent and appropriate manner. The defect of such as are more strong in the faith consists in their despising, nay, even ridiculing those, who are entangled by vain scruples as too

superstitious. The scrupulous, on the contrary, can scarcely avoid drawing hasty inferences, and are disposed to condemn what they do not fully understand, and to consider every thing improper, which is not done according to their own view of the subject. He warns the former to avoid contempt of their brethren, and the latter not to indulge in too much niceness and scrupulosity. The reason which he assigns, since it suits both classes of believers, applies to each member of the sentence. "Since you behold," says Paul, "a human being enlightened by the knowledge of God, you have sufficient proof of his being received by the Lord; and you reject, by despising or condemning such a character, one whom God has embraced."

*Who are you*—As you would act in an uncivil, nay, in a proud manner, by wishing to compel another man's servant to obey your laws, and to regulate all his conduct according to the rule and standard of your own will; so you act with too great presumption by condemning any thing in a servant of God, because it does not afford you pleasure. For it is not your duty to prescribe what conduct he ought to pursue, and what to avoid, nor is it necessary for him to live according to a law, which you prescribe. We are not entitled to judge either of his character or conduct. We ought, in judging of a man's character, to leave him, whatever he is, to the will of God. His conduct must be examined by the word of God, and not by the standard of our own opinion. The judgment formed by the word of God, is neither another's, nor man's. Paul intends, in this passage, to prevent us from falling into all rashness in forming our opinions, which those necessarily do, who dare pronounce judgment without the word of God. *To his own master he standeth or falleth*—It is properly the power of God to disapprove

or to applaud the conduct of his servant; all, therefore, who attempt to assume this power to themselves, act unjustly towards the Lord. By adding, *but he will stand*, he not only orders us to refrain from condemning, but exhorts to clemency and humanity, that we may always entertain good hopes of him, in whom we behold any thing of the divine character; because the Lord has given us cause to hope, that he will fully confirm and lead on to perfection those, in whom he has begun the work of his grace. For he does not argue simply from the power of God, as if he had said, God can do it if he chooses; but he unites, according to Scripture, God's will with his power. Nor does he determine, in this passage, the necessity of their continuing, as if those cannot fail abiding to the end, whom God hath once raised up; but he only exhorts and instructs us to entertain good hopes, and to let our judgments incline to that side, as he also teaches in another part of his epistles, Phil. i. 6. "He who hath begun a good work will finish it unto the end." To conclude, Paul shows how the judgments of those incline, in whom love is strong, lively, and vigorous.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

*One man esteemeth*—He lately spoke of religion in the choice of meats; he now adds another exam-

ple with regard to the difference of days; and each of these was derived from Judaism. For when the Lord distinguishes between meats in his law, and pronounces some unclean, and forbids the use of them; when he also appoints certain festival and solemn days, and commands them to be observed; the Jews, who had from their infancy been instructed in the doctrine of the law, could not lay aside that reverence for days, which they had conceived from the beginning, and to which they had been accustomed during the whole course of their lives, and they dared not touch meats which had been detested for so long a period. It was a part of their weakness to be imbued with these opinions; for had they clearly and certainly understood the nature of Christian liberty, they would have formed different opinions. It was the duty of piety to refrain from that conduct which they considered unlawful, as an attempt to do any thing, which was opposed to their own conscience, would have proceeded from rashness and contempt. The apostle, in this instance, adopts a wise moderation, when he orders every one to be fixed and determined in his plan; meaning, that Christians ought to study obedience with so much care as to do nothing which they do not think, or rather are sure will please God. And this principle of good living ought to be undoubtedly fixed in our minds, to depend and rest upon the will and nod of God, and not to allow ourselves to move a finger with a doubtful or vacillating mind; for rashness will immediately proceed, with rapid strides, to obstinacy, when we dare advance one step farther than we are permitted according to the conviction of our own conscience. Should the unceasing perplexity of error, and the impossibility, on that account, of weak persons enjoying that certainty, which Paul requires, be objected, an answer is easily ready,

since such characters will be pardoned, provided they keep themselves within their own prescribed bounds. For Paul was desirous merely to restrain that immoderate license, by the practice of which many thrust themselves, as it were by chance, into a doubtful and irregular course of actions. Paul, therefore, requires us to choose the will of God, which is to preside as the regulator and governor of all our conduct.

*He that regardeth the day, to the Lord he regardeth it*—Since Paul was fully and certainly convinced that the observance of days proceeds from an ignorance of Christ, we cannot believe he would have given his entire and unqualified support of such a corruption ; and yet the words seem to imply that no offence is committed by the observer of days, for God can accept nothing but what is good. It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between the opinion entertained by any one concerning the days to be observed, and the observance by which he binds himself. The opinion of the Jewish converts is superstitious, for Paul grants this by condemning it under the name *weakness*, and he will do it again soon in a more open manner. But God approves of the person, influenced by this superstition, who does not dare to violate the solemnity of the day, because a doubtful conscience has not courage to undertake any thing against conviction. For what could a Jew do, who had not yet made such a progress as to be freed from the religious observance of days ? The observance of days is commended in the word of the Lord, whose authority he grants. The necessity of observance is imposed by the law, and he does not yet perceive its abrogation. Nothing remains, therefore, but to wait for a more extended revelation, to confine himself within the bounds of his capacity, and not to enjoy the benefit

of liberty before he has embraced it by faith. The same opinion must be formed of him, who refrains from unclean meats. Should he eat in such a state of doubt and perplexity, he would not receive it as a benefit from the hand of God, but lay his hands on things forbidden. Let him, therefore, use other things which he considers to be allowed, and follow the measure of his own understanding. He will thus thank the Lord, which he could not do were he not fully convinced that he was fed and supported by the kindness of God. He is not to be despised on this account, as if he gave offence to the Lord by such sobriety and pious timidity. Nor is there any absurdity in saying, the modesty of a weak man is approved of God, not because he deserves approbation, but by the indulgence of his heavenly Father. But because he lately required certainty and conviction of mind, that no one might rashly, and of his own will, undertake the observance of any particular line of conduct with respect to days, or meats, we ought to consider whether the apostle does not rather exhort than affirm in this passage; for the following sense agrees better with the context: "Let every one be fully convinced of the reason of his actions, for he must give an account before the divine tribunal; since, both in eating and refraining from food, he must have a regard to the sovereign Giver of all blessings." Certainly nothing is better calculated to restrain an improper freedom in judging, or to correct superstition, than to be cited before the tribunal of God; and, on this ground, Paul wisely proposes to every individual to appear before that Judge, to the will and beck of whom he may refer all his actions. Nor is this view opposed by the apostle addressing them in the affirmative; for he immediately subjoins, *no one lives to himself, and no one dies to himself*; where he does not state what men may do, but commands what line of conduct

they ought to pursue. For he says that we then practise abstinence, and live to the Lord, when we give him thanks. Our use of meats, therefore, and our abstinence from them, without thanksgiving, is impure. We, and all our actions, can be sanctified by calling on the name of God alone.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

*For none of us*—He now confirms his former opinion, by reasoning from a whole to a part : namely, we need not wonder if the particular actions of our life ought to have respect to the Lord, since it ought to be wholly devoted to his glory. For the life of a Christian is then conducted in a proper manner, when the whole scope of his actions is regulated by the will of God. But, if all your actions ought to be referred to his will, it is altogether impious to attempt any thing, which you consider to be displeasing to him, nay, which you are not fully persuaded to be calculated to afford him pleasure. To *live to the Lord*, does not signify, as in chapter vi. 8, to be quickened by his Spirit, but to guide our conduct according to the will, pleasure, nod, and command of the Lord, and to order and regulate all things to his glory. Nor are we only to *live*, but *die to the Lord* ; both our life and death are to be surrendered to his will, and he adds the best of all reasons, because *whether we live or die, we are the Lord's*; whence it follows, that he has power equally over our life and death. The use of this doctrine is

extensive, for God's power is thus claimed over life and death, that the condition of every individual may be endured as a yoke imposed by the Disposer of all events ; for it is right for him to assign every one his station and course. And we are not only in this way forbidden to attempt any thing hastily without a command from God ; but patience is commanded us in all our troubles and inconveniences. If the flesh, therefore, at any time starts back from adversity, let us remember that a man, who is not free, and master of himself, perverts all law and order, if he does not depend upon the will, nod, and pleasure of his God. A rule of life and death is thus afforded us ; for if the Lord lengthens our life in the midst of continued troubles, uneasiness, and weariness, we ought not to desire to depart before our time ; and should he suddenly recall us in the very flower of our age, we ought to be invariably ready and equipped for our departure.

*For to this end Christ both died*—This affords a confirmation of the reason just assigned, with a view to prove that we must both live and die to the Lord ; for he had said, we are in the power of Christ, *whether we live or die*. He now shows how deservedly Christ claims for himself this power over us, having purchased it for so great a price. For by undergoing death for our salvation, he acquired a dominion for himself, which could not be dissolved by death ; and by rising, he had a claim upon all our life as his property ; by his death, therefore, and resurrection, he has merited that we should serve to the glory of his name both in death and life. The passage, *he rose and revived again*, signifies, that a new state of life had been procured for him by his resurrection. Because the life he now enjoys is not subject to change, his power and dominion over us are also eternal.

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother ? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother ? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more : but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

*But why dost thou*—Paul, after devoting the life and death of us all to Christ, passes on to mention the judgment conferred upon Christ by the Father with the dominion of earth and heaven. Hence he infers the unreasonable character of such boldness as usurps to itself the judgment of a brother, since, by this liberty, Christ the Lord is deprived of the power, which he alone hath received from the Father. But, by the very name of *brother*, he particularly restrains all inordinate desire for passing judgment. For if the Lord hath determined that we should have a mutual right to brotherly society, it is our duty to preserve our equality inviolate ; and every one, therefore, assuming to himself the character of a judge, will act an unreasonable part. He then recalls our attention to the only Judge, from whose tribunal none has a power to escape, much less to seize upon his authority. For a Christian to take to himself the liberty of judging the conscience of a brother would be as strong a proof of absurdity, as if a criminal, who ought to lie prostrate at the footstool of his judge, should seize upon his tribunal. Such is nearly the argument of James, (chapter iv. 11, 12,) “ He who judges a brother, judges the law, and is not

an observer of the law, but a judge ; while, on the contrary, he says, there is one lawgiver, who can both save and destroy." The word, *tribunal*, means, the power which Christ possesses of being judge, as the voice of the archangel, by which we shall be summoned, is named, in another place, (1 Thess. iv. 16,) the *trump*, for he will strike the minds and ears of all by his own awful sound.

*For it is written, As I live*—The apostle appears to me to have cited this testimony, (Isa. xlvi. 23,) not so much for the purpose of proving his opinion concerning the judgment of Christ, which was undoubtedly maintained among all Christians, as to show that all must expect it with humility and submission. Such, evidently, is the sense of the passage. His words, therefore, in the first place, prove that the judgment of the whole human race is in the power of Christ alone : he, secondly, here demonstrates, from the expressions of the prophet, that all flesh ought to be humbled in expectation of such a glorious judgment ; and this is signified by *every knee bowing down to his majesty*. Although the Lord, in this passage of the prophet, predicts in general that his glory will be distinguished among all nations, and his own majesty shine forth in every part of the world with splendour, which was concealed at that period, as in some obscure corner of the earth, among a very small number of people ; yet, if we take a narrower view of the subject, it is evident this prophecy is neither fulfilled now, nor ever has been, nor can any hopes be entertained of its future completion. God reigns, at this time, in the world only by his gospel ; nor is his majesty duly honoured in any other way than when it is made known to us in his word. The word of God always had its enemies, by whom it was obstinately opposed ; and its despisers, who mocked at it as a

mere fable, and a subject fit only for ridicule. Many characters of this description exist at the present time, and will continue through all ages. Hence, it is evident, this prediction commences indeed in the present life, but its completion cannot take place until the day of the last resurrection shall have shone forth, and Christ's enemies become his footstool, when the Lord shall have taken his seat for judgment, and on this account it is properly applied to Christ's tribunal. It is also a remarkable passage for confirming our faith in the eternal divinity of Christ. For God speaks in this passage, nay, the very God, who has declared, " My glory will I not give to another." (Isa. xlvi. 8.) Now, if that is completed in Christ, which God there claims for himself alone, the Deity, without doubt, manifests itself in Christ. The truth, indeed, of this prophecy openly appeared at that period, when Christ collected for himself a people from the whole world, and reduced it under the obedience of his gospel, and the worship of his name. Paul, also, had this text in his mind, (Phil. ii. 9,) when he says, " that God had given his Christ a name, at which every knee should bow." This will be fully manifested, when he shall have ascended his tribunal to judge both the quick and dead, since all judgment in heaven and earth has been given him by the Father. The words of the prophet are, " Every tongue shall swear to me;" but, since an oath is a kind of divine worship, the language of Paul in this verse, *every tongue shall confess to God*, conveys the same meaning. For the Lord intended merely to affirm, that all men would not only acknowledge his name, but confess their obedience to him, both by their mouth and the external gesture of their body ; namely, the bending of their knee to his authority.

*So then every one of us*—This conclusion recalls

us to humility and submission, from which also he immediately draws the inference, *Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more*; for we are not allowed to usurp the office of judge, who are necessarily obligated to undergo the divine judgment, and give an account of our conduct. For the apostle indirectly points out such malignant censurers as exert all their wit and talents in discovering something in the life and conversation of their brethren, which they may censure. He orders them, therefore, to adopt every cautious measure and plan, because, by their neglect, they frequently cast their brethren over some dreadful precipice, or drive them against some stumblingblock, by which they fall.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with *thy* meat for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18 For he that in these things serveth Christ, *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

*I know*—To prevent the objection of those Christians, whose progress in the gospel of Christ was so great that they made no distinction in meats, Paul just proves what opinion must be formed of meats, considered in themselves; and then subjoins the sin attending the circumstance of their use. He declares, therefore, that no meat is impure to a right and pure conscience, and the only impediments to

our making a pure use of meats are ignorance and error ; for, if any one imagines meat to be unclean, he cannot use it freely. He soon after adds, we must not only have respect to the kind of food itself, but to our brethren also, before whom we eat. For we ought not to consider the use of God's blessings to be so indifferent, as not to be subject to the law of Christian love. The meaning of the apostle is the following : " I know all meats to be clean, and, on this account, leave them to your own free choice. I allow your conscience to be disengaged from all scruples on this head, and I do not exclude you simply from the use of the meats themselves ; but I wish, while you dismiss from your thought the mere food, that you should not neglect your neighbour." The word, *unclean*, means profane, which is promiscuously used by the impious, in opposition to those, which are peculiarly sanctified for the use of a faithful people. He says that he *knows*, and is fully and undoubtedly *persuaded* of the cleanliness and purity of all food. The apostle adds, *in the Lord Jesus*, because his kindness and grace is the cause why all creatures are blessed to us by the Lord, which were otherwise cursed in Adam. He was, however, desirous, at the same time, to oppose the liberty granted by Christ to the slavery of the law, that believers might not consider themselves bound to an observance from which they had been delivered by Christ. His exception shows, that nothing is so pure as not to be contaminated by a corrupt conscience, for all our food and enjoyments are sanctified by faith alone, and true piety. Unbelievers are inwardly polluted, and infect every thing by their unhallowed touch. (Tit. i. 15.)

*But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat*—Paul now points out the three various ways by which a brother may be offended by our use of food, and

temporal enjoyments. Love, in the first place, is violated, if our brother is grieved for so slight a cause ; for it is contrary to love to be the means of plunging any one in sorrow. In the second place, the value of the blood of Christ is neglected by wounding a weak conscience ; for the most contemptible of the brethren is redeemed by the blood of Jesus ; and nothing can be more disgraceful than to destroy a brother for the mere gratification of the appetite. Surely we are, in a dishonourable manner, too much devoted to our animal gratifications, if we prefer food, which in itself is so very worthless, to Christ our Redeemer. The third reason is, that, if our Saviour has purchased a valuable liberty for us, we ought to use every exertion in our power to prevent our Christian freedom from being justly blamed, and evil spoken of by our fellow-men ; and this always takes place when we improperly abuse the gifts of the Source of all blessings. These reasons are sufficient to make us avoid offending, in a rash manner, our brethren, by improperly indulging our liberty.

*For the kingdom of God*—Paul now, on the other hand, informs us that we may without loss abstain from the use of our liberty, since the kingdom of God does not consist in these things. For it is our bounden duty never to omit the performance of those duties, which are calculated to raise and preserve the kingdom of God, whatever offences may result from so determined and noble a conduct. Those disturbers of the peace of the church cannot be tolerated, who might forbear from the use of meat for the sake of love to their weak brethren, without dishonouring God, inflicting any injury on Christ's kingdom, or offending against the laws of genuine piety. Paul uses the very same arguments in the first Epistle to the Corinthians vi. 13, “ Meats for

the belly, and the belly for meats ; but God shall destroy both it and them." 1 Cor. viii. 8, " Meat commendeth us not to God : for neither if we eat, are we the better ; neither if we eat not, are we the worse." Paul, in fine, wants to show that food and drink are in themselves too vile and contemptible to be made the cause of preventing the course of the gospel. *But righteousness and peace*—Paul did not contrast meat and drink with these three Christian graces, as if he intended to enumerate all the excellencies which form the kingdom of Christ, but merely to show that its glory consisted in the enjoyment of spiritual blessings. He has, however, in these few words, certainly included the sum of the gospel, namely, our rest with God in having our consciences sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, and possessing true joy by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us as a temple, and forming us to his glory. The possessor of true and genuine righteousness enjoys the highest and most inestimable blessing, the peaceful joy of conscience. What want or desire is felt by the believer who has peace with God ? *Peace*, in my opinion, expresses the manner in which spiritual joy is received ; for in whatever state of torpid feeling, or of vain exaltation, the reprobate may be placed, true joy and cheerfulness of conscience can only be possessed by those who feel God to be reconciled and propitious to them in Christ. Solid, substantial joy is the fruit of this peace. Although it is the bounden duty of every believer to proclaim the Spirit as the author of such invaluable gifts, yet Paul intended to make an allusion in this passage to the opposition which exists between the internal joys of the Spirit and mere external blessings. We may hence learn that all blessings pertaining to the kingdom of God may be enjoyed by us in the highest and most complete manner without the use of food,

which is required only for the maintenance and support of the body.

*For he that in these things*—It follows, as a necessary consequence, that the kingdom of God is in a perfectly vigorous and flourishing state with respect to those believers who are accepted of God and approved by men. The servant of Christ, who obeys his Redeemer with a calm and placid conscience by means of the righteousness which is by faith, commends himself both to God and man. The kingdom of God is complete and entire in all its parts, where righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy exist, and it therefore does not consist in things of a mere bodily nature. The obeyer of the will of the Most High must be necessarily acceptable to the God of love. Men cannot fail to approve of the conduct of those who exhibit in their lives and conversation a clear evidence of their being guided by virtue. The wicked, it must be granted, do not always spare the children of the King of glory; nay, the enemies of divine truth pour forth, without the least cause or occasion, the most opprobrious language against believers; and defame, by calumnies of their own invention, men of the most blameless characters. Even the good actions of the pious are perverted by malignant interpretations into vices. Paul is here speaking concerning the judgment of sincerity and truth, without any admixture of moroseness—with-out the least spark of hatred, and without the perverse statements of superstition.\*

\* The justice of these remarks is completely exemplified in the personal history of Calvin. He has been assailed in most instances, without truth or mercy, by the highest talents, the greatest learning, and the most indefatigable research. The enemies of the gospel rejoice in heaping disgrace upon his head, on account of his great efforts and success as a Christian: many of the adversaries of his theolo-

19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure ; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

*Let us therefore follow*—Paul uses every effort to recall the attention of his readers from the mere consideration of meats, to those higher and nobler attainments which ought chiefly to influence, regulate, and direct all our actions. We should eat to live,—we should live to act as the servants of the Lord. We perform due obedience to the Lord of heaven and earth, when we edify our neighbour by benevolence, kindness, and courteousness. Nearly all the duties of love may be summed up in harmony, union, and edification. To prevent his readers from undervaluing these gifts, Paul repeats his former opinion, that corruptible meat is in itself too contemptible to be made the cause of destroying the building of the Lord. For we may discern the work of the Lord wherever there is even the least spark of piety ; and the disturbers of a weak conscience by unkindness and harshness demolish this divine structure. Paul unites edification with peace, because too great indulgence and improper compliance

gical sentiments write, as if arguments were best answered by bespattering the characters of their opponents ; and the hierarchy of the Church of Rome never has, and never will forgive the deep wounds inflicted by his writings and labours upon their system of doctrine, discipline, and ceremonies.—*Translator.*

are frequently very destructive. We ought, therefore, never to lose sight of the spiritual advancement of our brother, and should never comply with any thing unless we consider it may promote his growth in grace. Paul instructs us, 1 Cor. x. 23, " All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient ;" and he adds the reason ; " but all things edify not." Paul justly again impresses the opinion, *for meat destroy not*, and means that we ought to use abstinence in such a manner as not to injure our piety, and should be careful not to eat any thing which may prove an offence to a doubting brother, since the kingdom of God does not consist in meats and drinks.

Paul grants by the expressions, *All things indeed are pure*, that there is nothing unclean ; and the passage, *but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence*, forms an exception. Our apostle wishes to convey the following meaning :—" Food is indeed good, but any offence, caused by its use, to a brother is evil." Food is granted to us that we may eat without doing any thing contrary to the great principle of love. To violate love in the use of meat pollutes what was otherwise pure. The apostle hence infers that we ought to abstain from every thing which may offend our brethren. Paul, by the words *stumble, is offended, is made weak*, points out the necessity of our not even causing our brother to fall,—of our not offending him, and our avoiding every thing by which he might be made weak. *To weaken* is less than to *offend*, and to *offend*, than to *fall*. The first takes place when the balance of the conscience of a brother begins to waver ; the second, when conscience is more powerfully shaken and disturbed ; the third, when zeal for religion is injured, and the affections alienated from the cause of Christ.

22 Hast thou faith ? have it to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith : for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

*Hast thou faith*—To bring the discussion to an end, Paul shows in what the excellence of Christian liberty consists ; and the false boasting of those is made plain and undoubted who have not learned to regulate the freedom they enjoy. The apostle says, that our knowledge of liberty arises from faith, and has properly a respect to God : the possessor of this certain and firm conviction of mind ought to rest satisfied with the calmness of his conscience in the presence of God ; nor is it necessary to manifest his possession of this liberty before his fellow-men. If, therefore, we offend our weak brethren by the use of flesh, we undoubtedly abuse our liberty, because we are not impelled to adopt such a line of conduct from any necessity. This passage is evidently perverted and misunderstood when it is adduced to support the opinion that a person may observe foolish and superstitious ceremonies without danger, provided his conscience is pure and undisturbed before God. The context clearly confutes such a misconstruction. Ceremonies are established for the worship of God, and are a part of our confession. To detach confession from faith is to deprive the sun of his heat. Paul merely disputes in this passage concerning the unrestrained use of meat and drink, without making any allusion to rites. *Happy is he that condemneth not himself*—Paul first instructs us how we may make a proper use of the gifts of God ; in the second place, how great a barrier ignorance

is, for the purpose of preventing us from urging the inexperienced beyond the limits of their own weakness. The general maxim, "Happy is he who is not accused and condemned by his own conscience," applies to all our actions, provided we examine our conduct in a right and proper manner. For many contrive and perpetrate the worst and basest of crimes without any scruple of conscience, because they shut their eyes, and hurry on whithersoever the blind and furious indulgence of the fleshly appetites and passions carry them, without ever reflecting upon the dangers to which their virtue and happiness are exposed. If we always make a broad line of demarkation between the voice of stupid ignorance and of a sound judgment, that man may be pronounced happy, whose conscience, after a careful examination of his whole conduct, does not sting him from a view of his sins, his errors, or his crimes. A good conscience is the only security we can have that our works are pleasing to the Judge of quick and dead. All vain excuses, alleged by many in consequence of ignorance, whose errors are closely entwined and connected with sloth and apathy, are thus completely set aside: for if mere good intention, as they call it, were sufficient, all self-examination, by which the Spirit of God weighs and values the works and deeds of men, would be vain and superfluous.

*And he that doubteth*—This one expression clearly points out the line of conduct necessary to be observed by a wavering and unsteady mind. Doubt implies a restless alternation, suspense, and wavering inclination of the understanding, between the various deliberations to which its attention is directed. Since, therefore, a certainty and placid security of conscience before God is the beginning of virtue and of good works, nothing is more opposed

to the approval of our actions, after self-examination, than uncertainty and trepidation of mind. Happy would it be for the human race if they steadily adopted the following maxim :—“ that they ought to engage in no undertaking which they did not certainly know to be agreeable to the will of infinite Perfection.” A steady adherence to this principle would prevent men from acting in so disorderly a manner during a great part of their lives,—from sleeping over the task assigned them, or from hurrying along with an unrestrained and blind impulse wherever they are driven by a heated imagination, or a reckless spirit of enterprise, lust, avarice, licentiousness, or ambition. For if we are not allowed to take a single mouthful of bread with a doubting conscience, how much greater caution ought to be used in transactions of the highest importance. *For whatsoever is not of faith*—Any work or action, however excellent or distinguished it may appear to be, provided it is not founded upon a right conscience, is considered to be sin. For God does not regard outward pomp and splendour, but the inward obedience of the heart. On this alone the whole value of our works depends. What kind of obedience is his, who does not engage in any transaction with a full conviction and persuasion of his enjoying the approbation of his God? The least doubt of the favour of the Most High deservedly convicts the agent as guilty of prevarication who pursues his mad career against the testimony of conscience. *Faith* in this place means a constant persuasion of mind, and an unshaken certainty, which are derived only from the truth of God. Uncertainty, therefore, and trembling doubt, vitiate and spoil all our actions, however splendid they may otherwise appear. The pious mind, since it can acquiesce with certainty in nothing else but the word of God, must regard all

fictitious worship, and every kind of work which arise from the imaginations of men, as vain and delusive. To condemn whatever is not of faith is a rejection of every thing that has not the support and approval of the word of God. Nor is it sufficient that our actions are approved by the word of God, provided our mind, depending and resting with confidence on this persuasion, does not engage with the utmost diligence and alacrity in the work to which it is directed. Let us always remember this great principle of a holy life; “that our minds ought never to be placed in a state of fluctuating uncertainty, but, relying and resting with confidence on God’s word, we ought to follow with perfect security wherever he calls.”

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## CHAPTER XV.

1 WE then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. 3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Paul shows that the greatness of strength in which some believers surpassed others, was conferred upon them for the purpose of their being enabled to assist the weak, lest they should fall. As the strong had made a greater progress, therefore, in the knowledge of God, they had no cause to be dissatisfied because they had to undergo a heavier burden. For as God intends the more enlightened and advanced in doc-

trine to be employed in instructing the ignorant, so he intrusts to those on whom he has conferred superior strength the task of devoting their powers to the support and protection of the weak. All the graces ought thus to be mutually communicated among the members of Christ's body. Every believer, therefore, is laid under greater obligations to support the weak in proportion as he is endowed with greater power in Christ, his Head. Paul means, by observing that a Christian ought not to act for his own pleasure, that his zeal and labour should not be directed merely to gratify himself, as is the character of those who, resting satisfied with their own judgment, neglect others with indifference and unconcern. This advice suits very well the present subject; for nothing impedes or retards more offices of kindness and condescension to others than the mere following of selfish plans, and gratifying of private affections, while the care of others is neglected in consequence of too great devotedness to self-interest.

*Let every one of us*—Paul informs us that believers are mutually obliged to each other, and it is our duty, therefore, to satisfy and strengthen every attention and regard; and we ought to adapt ourselves, without reserve or excuse, to the necessities of our brethren, when we can do it to their edification according to the word of God. Not content, therefore, with our own judgments, and not gratifying merely our own desires, we ought, on all occasions and times, and in all circumstances, to use in the first place every exertion, and leave no efforts untried for the purpose of affording our brethren every satisfaction. While we are thus desirous to adapt ourselves to the wants of our neighbours, we ought, in the second place, to keep our mind fixed on the Lord, and promote the spiritual edification of believers, as the great end and design of all our kindness, benevo-

lence, and courtesy. Since a large portion of mankind can only be gratified by indulging their inordinate affections, if you wish to ingratiate yourselves with them, their folly and vices must be gratified, while their eternal salvation is neglected. Your attention must not, therefore, be directed to the advancement of their spiritual welfare, since they will rest satisfied with the indulgence of their destructive and ruinous propensities. You must not on this account study to please those, whose only gratification consists in the pursuit of iniquity and vice.

*For even Christ pleased not himself*—If it is the duty of a servant to refuse no office which his master is prepared to undergo, it would be the height of absurdity for us to wish to exempt ourselves from the necessity of bearing the weaknesses of others, to which Christ submitted, in whom we glory as our Lord and King. For he laid aside all regard to himself, and devoted all his time, his talents, his influence, and zeal to the lost race of Adam. The whole of the 9th verse of the 69th psalm applies to Christ : “ For the zeal of God’s house hath eaten him up, and the reproaches of them that reproached God have fallen upon him.” Christ, it hence appears, glowed with so great a fervour for the glory of God, and was influenced and impressed with so great a desire for advancing the kingdom of the Lord of hosts, as to forget himself, and to be lost and absorbed in this one thought and feeling. The Messiah so completely devoted himself to the Lord, that his mind was pierced with grief as often as he beheld the sacred name of God reproached by wicked men. The second part of the verse, which relates to the reproaches of God, admits of two senses. It may either imply that Christ was as much affected with the reproaches cast upon God, as if he had been reproached in his own person ; or he felt as much grief

when he beheld the Lord of Sabaoth dishonoured, as he would have done had he been himself the author of such shameful reproaches. Should Christ reign in us, as he ought to rule in his faithful subjects, this same feeling will powerfully influence our minds, and every dishonour done to God's glory will torment us as much as if our own bosoms were filled with such reproaches of the Most High. Away with all those, whose highest ambition is to obtain the greatest honours in the Roman hierarchy, which dishonours the name of God with every kind of reproaches, tramples Christ under its feet, rails in reproachful language against the gospel itself, and persecutes it with fire and sword. It is, indeed, unsafe to receive such honours, not from the despisers merely, but the very reproachers of Christ.

4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. 5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; 6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*For whatsoever*—This is an application of the example adduced by the Psalmist to prevent any of his readers from imagining that his exhorting us to imitate Christ was too far fetched. The apostle, indeed, here confirms his wisdom in quoting David; and adds, that there is no part of the Scriptures, which may not contribute to our instruction, and to the forming of our life and manners. This beautiful passage shows us that the oracles of God contain nothing vain or unprofitable; and the assiduous

study and perusal of these records of unchanging Wisdom contribute to advance our piety and holiness of life. Let us, therefore, labour most assiduously in learning the contents of the book of God, and never forget it is the only writing in which the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth condescends to converse with man. It would be a reproach on the Holy Spirit of truth to imagine he had taught us any thing whose knowledge might not be of use to us ; and let us ever remember that his instructions tend invariably to the advancement of our piety. Notwithstanding Paul is here speaking of the Old Testament, yet the same opinion must be entertained of the writings of the apostles. For, if the Spirit of Christ always resembles itself, we can entertain no doubt of his adapting his doctrine to the instruction of his people now by the apostles, as he formerly did by the prophets. This passage affords a complete refutation of those fanatical spirits who boast of the abolishing of the Old Testament, as if it had no relation, and was of no use to Christians. What shameless impudence is it to endeavour to turn aside the attention of Christians from these holy books, which, according to Paul's testimony, are designed by God himself to promote their salvation. The additional part of the verse, *that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope,* does not include all the parts of that usefulness which is to be derived from the word of God, but gives only a brief statement of its chief end and design. For the Scriptures are chiefly devoted to the object of forming our minds to patience—of strengthening and confirming our comfort—of raising us to the hope of a better, even an eternal life—and of keeping our meditation and contemplation fixed on that glorious kingdom. I have no objections against translating *comfort* by *exhortation*, but the former agrees

better with the nature and character of patience, because the latter springs and emanates from the former. For we are then at last prepared to endure the billows of adversity, when God smooths them by his own comfort. For the patience of believers is not that unfeeling apathy commanded by the stoics and philosophers in the heathen world, but that meekness and quietness of spirit, by which we willingly and cheerfully submit ourselves to God, while all things are rendered sweet and pleasant to us by the taste and sense of his fatherly goodness, kindness, condescension, and love. This patience so cherishes and sustains peace in our hearts, as to prevent us from fainting.

*Now the God of patience*—God is thus denominated from the effects produced by him, and which were on a former occasion attributed to the Scripture from a very excellent, but different reason. God is, indeed, the alone author of patience and comfort, because he inspires both these graces into our hearts by his Spirit ; yet he uses his word as the instrument for accomplishing this object. For God first teaches us by his word what true consolation and patience are, and he afterwards inspires and ingrafts the doctrine thus taught in our hearts, minds, affections, and wills. Paul now turns from admonishing and exhorting the Romans to the performance of their duty, and has recourse to prayer ; for he was well assured that no dissertation of his own concerning duty could accomplish any thing, unless God, by the internal operation of his Spirit, should perform what he had spoken by the mouth of man. The whole object of the apostle's prayer is to bring the minds of the Romans to true union of spirit, and to make them harmonize with each other. He shows, at the same time, this bond of unity to consist in their being of the same mind according to the will of Christ. Every

conspiracy, combination, and union, out of God, is misery ; and whatever alienates our affections from the truth is out of God. And to make our union in Christ still more desirable, Paul points out its great necessity, since we cannot glorify God truly, unless the hearts of all believers unite to celebrate his praise, and their tongues also sing one joyful hallelujah to his glory. Let none dare to boast that he will glorify God in his own way ; for the Fountain of love sets so high a value upon the unity of his servants, that he will not suffer his glory to be sounded in the midst of the din of discord and contention. This one thought, "our harmony in praising God," ought to silence for ever the madness and wantonness with which dispute and controversy are carried on by too many at the present period.\*

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. 8 Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers : 9 And that the gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy ; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the gen-

\* When we recollect that the greatest part of Calvin's life was spent in controversy, his observations on its ruinous effects in the church of God deserve to be considered ; and we earnestly hope and pray that *churchmen* and *dissenters* may remember with what exultation and joy the enemies of religion behold the strongest bulwarks of both parties forgetting, neglecting, and despising, in their mutual disgraceful and destructive feuds, the love and harmony of the brethren. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. Walk in the Spirit, and fulfil not the lust of the flesh." Gal. v. 14, 15, 16.—*Translator.*

tiles, and sing unto thy name. 10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye gentiles, with his people. 11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye gentiles ; and laud him, all ye people. 12 And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the gentiles ; in him shall the gentiles trust.

*Wherefore receive ye one another*—In strengthening his exhortation, Paul clings to the example of Christ. For the Messiah embraced not one or two of the brethren, but all, at the same time, in such a manner as to show we ought to cherish each other, if we are desirous to remain in his bosom of infinite love. We shall finally in this manner confirm our calling, if we do not separate ourselves from those with whom we are united by the Lord. The sentence, *to the glory of God*, may relate either to us only, or to Christ, or to both conjointly. I take it in the last-mentioned sense. “As Christ has illustrated the glory of the Father by receiving us all to his grace when we stood in need of mercy, so we ought to establish and ratify the union and harmony which we have with Christ, for the purpose of magnifying the glory of the same God.”

*Now I say, that Jesus Christ*—Paul now shows in what way Christ embraced us all, where he leaves no difference between the Jews and gentiles, except his having first been promised, and in some measure peculiarly destined to the Jewish nation, before he was manifested to the gentiles. But he shows there was no difference between Jews and gentiles in what was the source of all their disputes ; for Christ had collected both of them from their miserable scattered state,—brought them, when thus assembled together, into the kingdom of his Father, to form

one flock—one sheepfold—one shepherd. Paul hence infers that it is proper for them to continue united, and not to despise each other, since neither of them was contemned or neglected by Christ. He therefore first speaks of the Jews, and states that Jesus was sent to them for the purpose of fulfilling the truth of God by performing the promises given to the fathers. And it is no mean or trifling honour that Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, was clothed with flesh, for the purpose of becoming a servant to procure their salvation. For he has conferred upon them a greater honour in proportion to the low state of humiliation in which he was placed on their account. Paul assumes this as an acknowledged and undoubted principle, so that we have greater cause to feel surprised at the impudence of certain fanatics, who do not hesitate to confine all the promises of the Old Testament to the body, to time, and the present world. Paul, to prevent the gentiles from claiming any excellence to themselves greater than that of the Jews, expressly declares the salvation procured by Christ to have been the peculiar privilege of the Jews according to covenant, because by his coming into the world he had fulfilled the promise formerly made by God the Father to Abraham, and had thus become the servant of the Jewish people. The consequence follows, that the ancient covenant was really and in truth spiritual, although annexed to earthly types and figures; for the fulfilment of the promises, concerning which Paul is here writing, must necessarily be referred to everlasting salvation. To prevent the cavil that, since the covenant itself was given to Abraham, salvation had only been promised to his grandchildren and posterity, the apostle expressly confines the promises themselves to the fathers. The power, therefore, and virtue of Christ himself, must either

be confined to earthly and bodily blessings, or the covenant made with Abraham extended farther than merely fleshly enjoyments.\*

*And that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*—Paul dwells a little longer in proving the mercy shown to the gentiles. The first quotation cited by Paul is certainly taken from Psalm xviii. 50, 2 Sam. xxii. 50; where it is an undoubted prophecy concerning the kingdom of Christ. Paul also proves the calling of the gentiles from this circumstance, that the confession of God's glory among the gentiles is there promised. For we cannot truly preach God except among those who hear his praises while they are sung in the congregation of the righteous. God's name, therefore, cannot be celebrated among the heathen without enduing them with the knowledge, and conferring upon them the communion of the people of the Lord. For the praises of God cannot be proclaimed, except in the assembly of the faithful, whose ears are capable of hearing the joyful sound of the gospel.

*Rejoice, ye gentiles, with his people*—I do not agree with those, who consider this quotation to be taken from the Song of Moses; for the Jewish law-giver intends, in that part of his writings, rather to strike terror into the adversaries of Israel, than to invite them to the participation of one common joy. I take it, therefore, from Psalm lxvii. 3, 4, where the Psalmist says, “Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.” Paul added, *with the people of God*, for the sake of explanation. For the Psalmist in-

\* Bishop Warburton exerted all his genius, and eloquence, and learning, to advocate the opinion so ably opposed in this passage by Calvin, and it is pleasing to reflect that the bishop has very few supporters at present.—*Translator.*

deed unites in that passage the heathens with Israel, and invites both equally to join in rejoicing, which can only take place where God is known.

*Praise the Lord, all ye gentiles*—This is a very appropriate quotation ; for how could a people, wholly ignorant of the greatness of God, offer praises to his name ? They could no more do this than call upon his name, with which they were altogether and entirely unacquainted. It proves, therefore, in a conclusive manner, the calling of the gentiles. The reason assigned by the Psalmist, that we should thank the Lord for his mercy and truth, gives additional force to Paul's reasoning. (Psalm cxvii. 1, 2.)

*Again, Esaias*—This prophecy (Isaiah xi. 10) is the most distinguished of all yet adduced. For the prophet in that passage comforts the small remains of the faithful, when their affairs were in the most deplorable, and almost desperate situation, by stating that a branch should come out of the dry and dead trunk of the family of David ; and a bough, which would restore the people of God to their former glory, should flourish from a despised root. The description of the prophet manifestly shows Christ, the Redeemer of the world, to be the branch, which will be lifted up as an ensign to which the gentiles will seek for salvation. Paul translates the expressions of the prophet, *stand for an ensign of the people*, by the word *rise*, which implies the same sense, and points to the distinguished eminence and conspicuous appearance of the Lord Jesus. Paul translates *seek* by *trust*, since, in the usual language of Scripture, to seek God is to trust in him. The calling of the gentiles is confirmed in this prophecy, since Christ is said to be raised up to them as a sign, who reigns in the midst of believers alone ; and this cannot take place without the preaching of the word, and the illumination of the Spirit. The Song of Simeon

corresponds with this passage from Isaiah. Hope in Christ is a testimony of his divinity.

13 Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. 14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, 16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

*Now, the God of hope*—Paul concludes his remarks with prayer, requesting the Giver of all good to grant the Romans obedience to all his commands. This clearly shows that the Source of all excellence never thinks of regulating, measuring, and determining his commands according to the extent of the powers, or of the free will of mankind. His orders with respect to our duties are given in such a manner, that we never once think of preparing to obey them by any reliance upon our own powers. The commands of the Lord of glory can only be performed by a steady reliance upon the assistance of his grace ; and we are thus continually excited to feel a zeal and an ardour in our supplications to the throne of mercy. The sense of this passage is the following :—“ May God, in whom all our hope is placed, fill you with a lively joy in your conscience—with unity and harmony in your faith, because your

peace with God can never receive his approbation, until you are united in the bonds of a pure unadulterated faith." Some understand the passage to mean that peace contributes to belief, for we are then properly and justly prepared to place all our faith in God and his word, when with calmness, tranquillity, unanimity, and harmony, we embrace the doctrine of the word of truth. Faith, however, is more properly combined with peace and joy, since it is the bond of a holy and legitimate concord and union, and the support and foundation of a pious joy. Although *peace* may mean the internal rest and tranquillity which we enjoy in God, yet the context leads us to the explanation already given. The apostle adds, *that ye may abound in hope*, because this grace is thus confirmed and increased in believers. *The power of the Holy Ghost* means that all our blessings are the gifts of the divine goodness. *Power* implies, and commends the wonderful and astonishing virtue, by which the Spirit of holiness, love, and consolation, works and produces in us believers faith, hope, joy, and peace.

*And I myself also am persuaded*—Paul by this concession is desirous to conciliate the believers in Rome, who might consider themselves attacked and aggrieved by so many and such anxious instructions and admonitions. He excuses his boldness, therefore, in assuming the character of a teacher and exhorter among the Romans. He assures them that his conduct in this instance arose from a sense of duty, and not from any doubt of their prudence, goodness, perseverance, or constancy. By this conduct Paul removes all the invidious feeling of rashness, which might have been brought against him for intruding into an office, which peculiarly belonged to another, or for treating on subjects, which did not

pertain to his province. Paul manifests the singular modesty and holiness of his heart and feelings, who was content and delighted to be regarded and esteemed as nothing, provided the doctrine he preached acquired, by such conduct, increased authority. The Romans were distinguished for pride and arrogance ; even the very meanest and lowest of the people were puffed up by the very name of the imperial city. Hence they were dissatisfied with the instructions of a foreigner, a barbarian, and a Jew. Paul has no wish to contend with this pride and conceit in his own private name and power. He is desirous to sooth and subdue it in his character and office as an apostle of the meek and lowly Jesus. *Full of goodness, filled with all knowledge—* Kindness, prudence, or skill in giving advice, are the chief characters of a wise and good teacher and instructor ; kindness inclines to assist the brethren by its counsels—by gentleness, and courtesy of language and demeanour ; prudence, or skill in giving advice secures authority, and the means of affording valuable and useful information to all who are prepared to listen to its instruction. Malignity and arrogance are so entirely and completely opposed to brotherly kindness and instruction, that wanderers from the path of rectitude treat advice, when given in such a manner, with pride and contempt, and are prepared rather to manifest the pride, haughtiness, and ridicule of contempt, than to submit to correction from such a quarter. Harshness, whether in language or the appearance of the countenance, deprives instruction of its use and value. A combination of kindness, courteousness, prudence, and skill in business, is highly necessary in giving advice. The Romans, who were abundantly endowed with kindness and skill in giving advice, were fully

enabled, according to Paul, to exhort and encourage each other without receiving assistance from any other quarter.

*Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you*—Paul, that he may show the greatness of his modesty in the excuse which he offers for having given the Romans advice, says, by way of concession, that he had, as an apostle, confidently interposed in performing for them, in this case, a duty which they were able to do by their own skill and powers. He adds, that the boldness which he manifested on this occasion arose from the necessity imposed upon him by his office, as a minister of the gospel to the gentiles, and he could not therefore pass by those who belonged to the heathens. Paul exalts, by humbling himself, the excellence of his office. He does not suffer his apostolic office to be despised, but confirms the honour thus conferred upon him by ascribing it to the grace of God. Paul asserts that he had not assumed the office of a teacher, but an admonisher, whose duty consists in recalling to mind truths which were already known.

I prefer the translation, *consecrating the gospel*, to the version adopted at first by Erasmus, *ministering the gospel*. Paul undoubtedly alludes here to the sacred mysteries performed by the priest. He makes himself a priest in the office of the gospel by offering those believers, whom he secures to become servants of the Most High, as a sacrifice to the Lord of glory. In this way he is employed in performing the sacred mysteries of the gospel. The priesthood of a true Christian pastor consists in offering men, whom they have brought to yield obedience to the gospel, as sacrifices to the Lord of Hosts. How different the conduct of the Roman Catholics, who boast with great pride in their reconciling men to God by the offering of Christ. Paul does not denominate the

pastors of the church of Christ simply priests by a perpetual title, but he uses the metaphor on this occasion, because he is desirous to commend the dignity and efficacy of his ministry. Every preacher of the gospel, in the performance of his functions as an ambassador of Christ, ought always to keep in mind the end and design of his office, namely, the offering to God of souls which have been purified by faith. Erasmus afterwards corrected his first translation, *ministering the gospel*, and adopted, in an improper and obscure sense, the version, *sacrificing the gospel*. The gospel must be viewed as the sword with which the minister of the word of God offers men as victims and sacrifices to the King of glory. He adds, that such victims are *acceptable* to God, and thus not only commends his ministry, but affords great and distinguished comfort and consolation to believers, who deliver themselves up to be consecrated. As ancient sacrifices were dedicated to God by certain sanctifications, purifications, and washings, so believers in Christ are consecrated as victims to the Lord by the Spirit of consolation, truth, and peace, and are separated from the world lying in the wicked one by the inward operations and power of the Holy Ghost. For, although purity of mind arises from faith in God's word, yet, because the voice of man can of itself accomplish nothing, and is dead, the office of purifying the believer belongs truly, really, and properly, to the Spirit of grace and love.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.  
18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the gentiles obedient, by word and deed,  
19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the

power of the Spirit of God ; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation : 21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see : and they that have not heard shall understand.

*I have therefore*—Paul, after commending in general his calling, with a view to inform the Romans of his being a true and an undoubted apostle of Christ, breaks forth into the language of praise, and shows he had not only undertaken, but adorned in a very distinguished manner, the apostolic office, which had been enjoined him by the appointment of God. He mentions his own fidelity, to which he had steadily adhered in the execution of his office. Our appointment to an office is of little moment, if we do not answer to our calling, and give satisfaction in performing our duties. The apostle does not commend himself from an ardent desire for securing glory and honour, but that he might leave no means untried by which he might secure among the people at Rome favour and authority to the doctrine which he taught. He glories, therefore, in God, and not himself ; and the design and tendency of the whole passage is to return lasting and solid praise to the Lord of Hosts. His speaking negatively is a sign of modesty, while it confirms the truth of his assertions : the following is the sense of the passage :—“ Truth itself affords me so copious a subject for glorying, that, satisfied with what is true, I have no occasion to have recourse to false praise, which others have a right to claim as their

own." Perhaps, too, he wished to anticipate evil reports, which he knew the malevolent were ready to rumour on all occasions, and in all places ; and he therefore ushers in his remarks by observing, that he intended to speak on subjects which were well known, and fully ascertained to be true.

*To make the gentiles obedient*—This sentence shows that Paul intended to add weight to his ministry among the Romans, by pointing out the power and success of his doctrine. *Signs* prove that God, by the presence of his own power, had so afforded a witness to the preaching of Paul, and set a seal to his apostleship, that none had a right to doubt his mission and appointment to be from the Lord of the harvest. *Word, work, and miracles*, are intended by *signs*, and it hence appears that the meaning of the word *deed* is more extensive than *miracles*. The concluding sentence, *by the power of the Spirit*, means, that the Holy Ghost alone could be the author of those signs, and wonders, and word, and work. In fine, Paul asserts, that both by teaching and acting he had possessed great power and energy in preaching Christ, by which the wonderful efficacy of the Almighty was made to appear. Miracles were also superadded, and, as seals, certified and declared more fully that the hand of the Lord was with our apostle, by the nature, extent, and magnitude of the works which he performed. After first stating *word* and *deed*, he particularly specifies the power of working miracles. Thus Luke xxiv. 19, Christ is said to have been "powerful in word and work." In John v. 36, Christ himself sends the Jews to his own works as affording a testimony of his divinity. Paul does not simply mention miracles, but distinguishes them by two different titles. Peter (Acts ii. 22) calls what are here termed *mighty signs and wonders*, "miracles,

and wonders, and signs." These are indeed proofs and testimonies of the divine energy, for the purpose of exciting and awakening the attention of mankind, that, being struck and deeply impressed by the amazing power of the Lord, they may at the same time wonder, admire, and adore the works of his hands. They convey to us an important meaning ; and these signs rouse us to have a more full and extensive acquaintance with God, the Creator and Redeemer of mankind. This is a striking passage concerning the use of miracles, which are calculated to excite in man a reverence and obedience to God. Thus, Mark xvi. 20, "The Lord confirmed the word with signs following ;" and Luke (Acts xiv. 3) says, "The Lord gave testimony unto the word of his grace by wonders." Every power, and every means, therefore, by which glory is sought for the creature, and not for God the Creator ; by which belief is secured for lies, and lying vanities, and not for the word of infinite Truth, evidently spring from the devil. I refer *the power of the Spirit of God*, which is last mentioned by Paul, to the word, to works, and to miracles.

*So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum*—Paul adds, as a testimony to the success of his ministry, the effects which it had produced ; for the results of his preaching surpassed all human powers. For what preacher, unassisted by the power of God, could have collected so many churches to Christ ? Paul says, "I have propagated the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum ; not proceeding in a straightforward course, but visiting, by a circuitous route, all the intermediate parts of the country." The Greek verb translated *fully preached*, means to *perfect* as well as to supply what is wanting ; and the verbal noun derived from it implies both perfection and supplement. I therefore readily

adopt the following exposition of the passage :—  
“ That Paul diffused the preaching of the gospel by supplying the lack of others ; for he had disseminated the divine truth much more extensively than any of the other apostles or preachers of the gospel by whom he had been preceded.

*Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel*—Because it was necessary for Paul, not only to prove himself a servant of Christ, and pastor of the Christian church, but to claim the character and office of an apostle, with a view to secure the attentive audience of the Romans, he here lays down the proper and peculiar mark and distinctive character of apostleship. The duty, indeed, of an apostle is to disseminate the gospel where it has not yet been preached, according to the command of Christ, “ Go and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark xvi. 15.) We must be careful, in making this observation, lest we adduce it as an universal example, which ought to be peculiarly limited and confined to the order of apostles. The substituting of successors to the first builders of the church of Christ can be blamed by none ; for while the apostles must be considered the founders of the church, the pastor, who succeeded them, ought to defend, and also to enlarge and increase the building, which these favoured servants of God have erected. Paul calls that *another man's foundation*, which has been laid by some other apostle, for Christ, properly speaking, is the only Stone on which the church is built. (1 Cor. iii. 11 ; Eph. ii. 20.)

*But, as it is written*—Isaiah's prophecy (lii. 15) confirms what Paul had said concerning the sign of his apostleship. For, in Isaiah lii. 10, the prophet, when speaking of the kingdom of the Messiah, predicts “ that the Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of

the earth shall see the salvation of our God." It was necessary for the fulfilment of this prophecy that the knowledge of Christ should be carried to the heathen, who had never yet heard of his name. A special command was given to the apostles for the performance of this great work, and the apostleship of Paul is manifestly established, because in him this prophecy is fulfilled. There is no foundation for perverting this passage by applying it to the pastoral office; for we know that the name of Christ must always continue to be preached in well-regulated and properly-constituted churches, where the truth of the gospel has been for a long period felt and acknowledged. Paul, therefore, preached Christ to foreign nations, which were wholly unacquainted with the principles of the gospel, that the pastors of the church might daily and constantly proclaim with their lips the same doctrine, after his departure, in every place, where he had sown the seeds of divine righteousness and truth. The justice of this observation is clearly established, since the predictions of the prophet Isaiah, in the passage here quoted by Paul, evidently relate to the commencement of the kingdom of Christ.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; 24 Whensover I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

*For which cause also*—Paul excuses his conduct for not having visited the Romans sooner, since he

had been appointed for them as well as the rest of the heathens. Paul, therefore, embraces this opportunity for making his apology to the Romans; and shows that, in disseminating the gospel from Judea to Illyricum, he had completed a certain course, which was assigned him by the Lord, and had resolved, on accomplishing this part of his apostolic labours, not to neglect the Romans. He removes all suspicion, which they might feel, of want of due attention on his part to their spiritual interests and welfare, by declaring and testifying his long-continued desire to accomplish this object. A just impediment had prevented him from accomplishing his intended journey to Rome at an earlier period; but he now gives them hopes of a visit, as soon as his calling will allow. The argument taken from this passage to prove that Paul went to Spain is weak and inconclusive, for it by no means immediately follows, that our apostle went to that country, because it was his intention to carry the gospel thither. For Paul only speaks of the hope which he entertained of accomplishing a visit to the Spaniards; but he might, as other believers have done, sometimes experience the disappointment of his expectations.

*For I trust to see you*—Paul touches upon the cause of his long-continued wish and present determination to come to the Romans, that he might see them, and enjoy a personal interview and social conversation with the disciples of Christ in Rome, and appear before them in his apostolic character and office; for an increase of the gospel is comprehended under the arrival and visit of an apostle. When Paul says, *I shall be brought on my way thitherward by you*, he intimates how much pleasure he promised himself from their kindness and benevolence; and this, as we have already stated, was the best and surest plan for securing their favour and esteem.

For every person considers his obligation to another increased in proportion to the extent of the confidence, with which he knows that a reliance is placed upon his assistance ; for we regard it as a disgrace, and inconsistent with all the feelings of humanity, to deceive any one in the opinion which they have formed of our aid and kindness. The subjoined sentence, *if first I be somewhat filled with your company,* proves the reciprocal kindness, which the apostle was desirous to cultivate ; and it was of very great importance for the interest of the gospel that the Romans should be convinced of his entertaining this feeling.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27 It hath pleased them verily ; and their debtors they are. For if the gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28 When, therefore, I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

*But now*—To prevent the Romans from soon expecting his arrival, and considering themselves to be deceived, should he be detained longer than they imagined, Paul acquaints them with his present journey to Jerusalem for the purpose of carrying the alms, which had been collected for the poor in that city, from Achaia and Macedonia. This duty, he observes, would hinder his immediate journey to

Rome. He seizes this opportunity, and gradually proceeds to recommend this contribution, that he might excite the Romans, by hints, to imitate the conduct of their Achaian and Macedonian brethren. For, although he does not openly request the Romans to make a collection, yet, by stating that it was the bounden duty of Macedonia and Achaia to adopt the course, which, on this occasion, they had observed, he gently intimates the same duty to be required of the Romans, since they were in circumstances precisely similar. His open confession to the Corinthians proves this to have been his object, where (2 Cor. ix. 2) he states, "I boast of you to them of Macedonia, and Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many." It was, indeed, an instance of rare piety, that the Greeks, on hearing of the poverty of their Christian brethren at Jerusalem, did not consider the great distance by which they were separated from them; but, in consequence of their union by the bond of faith, they regarded Zion as not too far removed from Corinth, and relieved the indigence of the believers in that city out of their own abundance. The word *contribution*, or *communication*, is very properly used, for it very well expresses the affection and feeling with which we ought to assist the poverty of our brethren, on account of the common, mutual, and reciprocal relation, arising from the unity which exists among the members of the body of the church. Because the Greek pronoun, which means *a certain* contribution, is often redundant, and does not add to the emphasis of the passage, I have entirely omitted it in my version. I have translated the Greek participle, which signifies *ministering*, by the verb *to minister*, since it seemed to express more properly the meaning of Paul; for he assigns, as an excuse for not hastening immediately his journey to

Rome, the just and useful business of supplying the want of the saints, in which he was then engaged.

*And their debtors they are*—Every reader must feel convinced, that the obligation here mentioned applies as strongly to the Romans as the Corinthians; for the former people were as deeply indebted to the Jews, as the Macedonians, or inhabitants of Corinth. Paul assigns, also, the cause of the obligation, which was the receiving of the gospel from the Jews, and derives his argument from the less to the greater. He uses this reasoning, 1 Cor. ix. 11: “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?” which are immensely much more vile and contemptible than the blessings of the gospel. Paul shows the value of the kingdom of heaven by declaring the heathens to be debtors, not only to the ministers and servants of divine truth, but to the whole Jewish nation, from whom these ministers had been descended. The Greek word, here translated *minister*, signifies, to perform the duty assigned by the state, and to undergo the burdens of the calling determined by Providence. On some occasions, also, it is referred to the performance of sacred duties. Paul, I have no doubt, meant, by this term, a kind of sacrifice to be offered by believers, when they supplied the necessities and poverty of their indigent brethren out of their own substance. For the duty of love, which they owe, is paid in such a manner as to be offered at the same time as a sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour to Jehovah, the King of glory. Paul, however, had a peculiar regard, in this passage, to the mutual satisfaction and recompence, which could be claimed as a just debt by the Jews from the heathens, on account of the spiritual blessings flowing to the latter from the former, who ought to repay them by temporal comforts.

*When I have sealed to them this fruit*—I think Paul here made an allusion to the custom of the ancients, who secured and shut up by the seal of a signet their valuable treasures. Paul thus commends his fidelity and integrity, and declares he will be as faithful a keeper of the money intrusted to his hands as if he carried it under a seal. *Fruit* indicates the yearly profit and revenue accruing to the Jews, as Paul had just mentioned, from the sowing of the gospel; just as the field, properly cultivated, supports the husbandman by the fruit which it yields.

*And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness*—These expressions admit of two explanations. The first sense is, that he would find an abundant fruit of the gospel at Rome; for good works, the fruit of faith, form the great blessing of the gospel, since I am by no means satisfied with the interpretation which limits the meaning of this expression to alms-giving. The second explanation follows: “Paul, for the purpose of making the Romans more earnest in wishing for his arrival, expresses a hope, that he would not be unfruitful, since a great increase of the gospel, here called *the fulness of the blessing*, or by a Hebraism *full blessing*, and which means the prosperous success and enlargement of the divine kingdom, would be the consequence of his exertions. This blessing depended partly upon Paul’s ministry, and partly upon the faith of the Romans. He promises, therefore, that he would not visit them in vain, since he would not uselessly throw away among them the grace which he had received, but lay it out to a good purpose, on account of the alacrity with which they were prepared to receive the gospel.” The former interpretation is more commonly received, and more completely meets my approbation, “that Paul, on his arrival, expected he would have his most earnest desires gratified by

finding the gospel flourishing and prospering among them with distinguished success, by the great holiness of their lives, and their excellence in every kind of virtue. He assigns, as a cause of his desire, the uncommon joy which he expected to derive from an interview with believers, whom he would behold abounding in all the spiritual riches of the everlasting gospel."

30 Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me ; 31 That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea ; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints ; 32 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. 33 Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

*Now I beseech you*—Very many passages prove the malignant and spiteful grudge entertained against Paul by his own nation, on account of the false complaints and calumnies raised to ruin his character, as if he taught the forsaking of Moses and of the law. Paul knew how easily the greatest innocence may be oppressed by unfounded accusations, particularly among those who are hurried off by inconsiderate and blind zeal. The witnessing of the Spirit, mentioned Acts xx. 23, occasionally forewarned him "that bonds and afflictions abide him at Jerusalem." His trouble increased, therefore, with the extent of the danger to which he saw he was exposed. Hence proceeded his very great anxiety in commanding his own safety to the various churches ; nor need we be surprised at his

solicitude on account of his own life, since he knew its loss would be accompanied with so great a danger to the church. Paul testifies what trouble and care distressed his pious breast : what vehemence also appears in his calling God to witness, while to the name of the *Lord* he adds *the love of the Spirit*, by which the saints ought mutually to embrace each other. He ceases not, however, in the midst of so much fear and trembling, to pursue an onward course ; nor is he so afraid of danger, as not to be willingly prepared to undergo it ; but he furnishes himself with divine remedies. He summons to his assistance the aid of the church, that, by their prayers, he may receive comfort, according to the *Lord's* promise, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them ;” (Matt. xviii. 20;) and again, “I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 19.) And he *beseeches them by Christ* and *the love of the Spirit*, that none might imagine what he commended them to do was slight or trifling. That is called *the love of the Spirit*, in which we are united by Christ, because it is not of the flesh, nor of the world, but proceeds from his Spirit, which is the bond of our unity. Since, therefore, to be assisted by the prayers of the faithful is so great a divine blessing that even Paul himself, that most chosen instrument of God, did not think of neglecting it, what sloth and indolence is it on our part, who are misery, vileness, and nothingness itself, to despise this powerful means of obtaining the smiles of Omnipotence. It is the height of impudence to take this passage as an occasion and handle for supporting the doctrine of the intercession of dead saints. *That ye strive together with me*—The version, by Erasmus, to

*assist me in my labours*, is not a bad one, but I prefer a literal translation, because it is more emphatic. For the word *strive* shows the straits in which he was placed; and when he orders his brethren to assist him in this pressing difficulty, we see a proof of the affection, which believers ought to feel for each other in their intercessory prayers. They should actually take upon themselves the person and character of their afflicted brethren, as if they were placed in the same difficulty and necessity. He points also to the effect which these intercessors are capable of producing; for, by commanding a brother to the Lord, he takes a part of the burden upon himself, and affords him so much assistance and relief. And, if our strength is placed in calling on the name of God, we cannot bestow greater strength upon our brethren, than by invoking for their assistance the name of Jehovah.

*That my service which I have for Jerusalem—* Paul's calumniators had been so successful in their false charges against him, as to excite in his breast a feeling of solicitude, lest the present, which he was carrying, might not be very welcome from his hands, although it would be offered, in the midst of such pressing want and necessity, at a very convenient season. Our apostle's astonishing meekness appears from his not ceasing to labour for the temporal wants of the Jews, even while he entertained a doubt of his exertions being regarded with pleasure by those very persons, whose wants he was endeavouring to supply. We ought to imitate his disposition of mind manifested on this occasion, and never cease performing acts of kindness to those from whom we have no certain and well-founded cause to expect the least gratitude.\* Paul knew that saints

\* A steady adherence to this truly Christian principle, in which Calvin himself also excelled, would be found very use-

also, on some occasions, might be hurried off by false accusations, and induced to entertain an evil and harsh opinion of the conduct of some of their brethren. Our apostle persists in making honourable mention of those very believers, even when he certainly knew his character to be injured by their representations. The additional sentence, *that I may come unto you*, implies that this prayer would also prove highly useful to the Romans, since his being killed in Judea would prevent his exertions for their advantage and instruction. It was of importance also that he should come *with joy*; since, should he arrive among them in all the liveliness of hilarity, and without one gloom of grief and sorrow, he would be enabled to devote all his time, all his attention, and all his pains and study, with more animation and more activity, to the promoting of their spiritual improvement. The expression, *refreshed*, or *delighted*, shows how fully convinced he was of their fraternal attachment. The sentence, *by the will of God*, instructs us in the necessity of devoting ourselves to prayer, since God alone directs all our paths, and all our steps, by his gracious and unerring providence.

*Now the God of peace*—The universal expression, *with you all*, shows, that Paul did not pray to God for his presence and favour merely with the Romans in general, but for his guidance and direction of every individual believer in that city. The epithet, *peaceful*, must be referred to the circumstance of the passage, and means, “ May God, the Author of peace, extend his preserving care to every saint in Rome.”

ful in securing the peace and happiness of mankind. How many arrows might strike, taken from the quiver of ingratitude, without leaving a single wound!—*Translator.*

## CHAPTER XVI.

1 I COMMEND unto you Phebe, our sister, which  
is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea ;  
2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh  
saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business  
she hath need of you : for she hath been a succourer  
of many, and of myself also. 3 Greet Priscilla and  
Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus ; 4 Who have  
for my life laid down their own necks : unto whom  
not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of  
the gentiles. 5 Likewise *greet* the church that is  
in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus,  
who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ. 6  
Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.  
7 Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and  
my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the  
apostles, who also were in Christ before me. 8  
Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9 Salute  
Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my be-  
loved. 10 Salute Apelles, approved in Christ.  
Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*.  
11 Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that  
be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the  
Lord. 12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who  
labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis,  
which laboured much in the Lord. 13 Salute Rufus,  
chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.  
14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas,

Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. 15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. 16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

*I commend unto you*—A considerable part of this chapter is devoted to salutations; and, as they are attended with no difficulty, it would be loss of time to dwell at any length upon so plain a subject. I will touch only on those points, which require some elucidation. He commends Phebe, the bearer of the epistle, first, from her office, as having been a very honest and holy servant of the church; and secondly, for having always devoted her time and labour to the supplying of the wants of all the believers, on which account it was their bounden duty to pay her every attention. Paul orders her to be received in the Lord, because she was a servant of the church at Cenchrea. His additional sentence, *as becometh saints*, intimates that it would be altogether unworthy and unbecoming the servants of Christ to show her no honour, and distinguish her by no kindness. And indeed it is highly becoming to embrace with affection—to manifest esteem, peculiar love, and honour to all the members of Christ, but especially to such as are employed in any public function and office. Paul orders them to show her, in return, aid and assistance, as she had been invariably kind in attending to the wants and demands of all the brethren. It is merely obeying the voice of humanity, not to forsake a character whose disposition is naturally benevolent, when he stands in need of the assistance of others. Paul, with a view of increasing their kindness to her, includes himself among those who had received personal assistance at her hands.

Our apostle (1 Tim. v. 9, 10) acquaints us with the ministry to which he here alludes. Public officers were appointed by the church for attending to the maintenance and support of the poor ; and widows, who were released from domestic cares and labours, encumbered with no children, and were constantly desirous to devote themselves to the duties of religion, and obedience to the Lord, were appointed to this office, and bound by strict obligation to its fulfilment. They were not at liberty to consider themselves to be their own mistresses, since all their time and attention were required to take care of others. The apostle accuses them of want of faithfulness, and of adherence to their engagements, if they resigned the office to which they were appointed. Paul forbids, therefore, the choosing of widows under three-score years old, (1 Tim. v. 11,) since he clearly foresaw that a vow of perpetual celibacy, which it was necessary for them to observe, was dangerous, nay, ruinous, before that age. This very holy office, which was extremely useful for the church, degenerated, during the more corrupt periods of Christianity, into the idle and lazy order of nuns. Although this order, from its very first origin, was bad, and contrary to the word of God, yet it has now so far degenerated from its original object, that it is as dangerous as a brothel would be, if situated within a chapel set apart to chastity.

*Greet Priscilla and Aquila*—These testimonies are given to the characters of certain members of the church, with a view to confer honour on probity, by the esteem which is shown the virtuous and worthy, and to increase the authority and power of such as have the inclination and the will to be useful to others. They are necessary, also, in exciting an ardour in the breasts of those who are commended to pursue, with steady perseverance, their former paths of virtue, and not to faint in their career of piety, nor

to grow languid in their zeal. He confers distinguished honour on Aquila and Priscilla, who was the wife of the former, as stated by Luke. (Acts xviii. 1.) The peculiar modesty of our holy apostle appears in the praise he bestows on Priscilla; since he does not despise the assistance of a female in the work of the Lord, nor blushes to confess the advantage which he had experienced from such a coadjutor.

*Unto whom not only I give thanks*—Paul here gives a testimony of his private gratitude to Priscilla and Aquilla, on account of the protection which they afforded his life by not sparing their own. He endeavours to excite feelings of kindness in the breasts of the Romans to these two saints by mentioning the thankfulness of all the churches of Christ. Paul was deservedly esteemed and loved by all the heathens, since he was an incomparable treasure, and we need not be surprised to find all the gentile churches impressed with a deep sense of their obligation to the preservers of so valuable a life. It is worthy of observation, that Paul could not confer a more distinguished honour and ornament on this family than by making mention of the church in their house. I am not satisfied with Erasmus's translation, *congregation*, for Paul undoubtedly made an honourable mention of the *church* in this passage.

*Who is the first-fruits of Achaia unto Christ*—This alludes to legal ceremonies; for, since those are sanctified to God by faith who have the first place in being offered to the Lord of Hosts, they are properly denominated first-fruits. Besides, the prerogative of honour is bestowed by Paul according to the priority of time, when faith took place. This, however, is only the case when they persevere in the faith steadfast unto the end. Certainly, no small honour is bestowed on such as are chosen to be the first-fruits

unto God. A greater and nobler proof of faith is exhibited by the length of its continuance, when those, who have commenced, do not weary in their Christian course. He affords another proof of his gratitude, by mentioning the labours and attention which Mary had bestowed. We cannot doubt his design in these honourable testimonies was to commend those, whom he praised, more strongly to the Romans.

*Salute Andronicus*—Although Paul is not accustomed to affix any high value on family, or other carnal privileges, yet, because his relationship to Junia and Andronicus might contribute to make the Romans take more notice of them, he does not omit, in the first place, even this ground of praise. The second kind of praise which he bestows upon them, that of their being *fellow-prisoners*, is of greater importance, because bonds are considered to be not the least honourable ornaments in the Christian warfare. Thirdly, Paul does not use the word *apostles* in its peculiar and usual sense, but in a more extended signification, and applies it to all those who do not establish merely some one church, but spend their time and labour in promulgating the gospel everywhere. In this passage, therefore, Paul generally calls those *apostles*, who were employed in preaching the doctrine of salvation in various parts for the purpose of planting churches. He restricts the meaning of this word in other passages to the twelve disciples, who were first chosen by Christ; and it would be absurd to ascribe this great excellence in the proper sense of the term to these two believers. He does not hesitate to prefer Andronicus and Junia to himself, because they had been the first to embrace the gospel of Christ.

*Greet them that are of the household of Narcissus*—It would be too great a slight on Peter to have

omitted mentioning him in so large a catalogue, had he, according to the opinion of the Roman Catholics, been then at Rome. If, therefore, in doubtful questions, we are compelled to have recourse to probable conjecture, no judicious person will be induced to believe the truth of their statement, since Paul never would have omitted the enumerating of so distinguished an apostle. It is also worthy of observation, that none of those splendid and magnificent names are here mentioned, which might lead us to conclude that the Christians were persons of high rank, for such as are stated by Paul were of obscure and ignoble families. As I consider Narcissus, who is here mentioned, to have been Claudius' freeman, infamous by the number of his crimes and the extent of his profligacy, so the goodness of God, which penetrated into this impure family, burning with every kind of wickedness, has a greater claim on our admiration. I do not, by any means, consider Narcissus himself to have been converted to Christianity; but it is very striking to find the grace of God visiting a house which resembled even hell itself. Since, however, those who constantly resided under the roof of a filthy pander, a most greedy robber, and a thoroughly depraved character, worshipped Christ with purity, slaves need not wait for the conversion of their masters, but each may follow Christ for himself. It appears, from the exceptions mentioned, that there were only few believers in the family.

*Salute you with a holy kiss*—A kiss, as appears from various passages of Scripture, was the frequent and usual mark of kindness among the Jews. Such a custom was perhaps less common among the Romans, but it was not unusual; women, however, were only allowed to receive the salutations of their relations. This, however, became a practice among the ancients, so that Christians mutually saluted

each other before receiving the Lord's Supper, as a mark and testimony of their friendship; after which they gave alms, for the purpose of proving also, in very deed and effect, what they had represented by a kiss, as appears from one of Chrysostom's homilies. Hence originated the ceremony, now used among the Roman Catholics, of kissing the cup, and offering the oblation. The former of these is a mere superstitious practice, without any advantage; the latter contributes to no other purpose but that of satiating, if it be possible, the avarice of the priests. Paul does not indeed appear positively to require this ceremony, but he only exhorts them to cherish brotherly love, which is distinguished by him from the profane friendship of the world, that is generally either counterfeited and disguised, or consists of nothing but wickedness, or is kept together by evil arts, and is never directed to a proper object, nor tends to a useful end. On wishing health to the churches, he is desirous to bind together, by the mutual bond of love, all the members of Christ.

17 Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. 19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad, therefore, on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. 20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

*And I beseech*—He now gives an exhortation, which is necessary for occasionally correcting all churches, since the ministers of Satan constantly watch every opportunity for disturbing the kingdom of Christ. Two methods are adopted by them for the purpose of producing this disturbance,—either by sowing dissensions, which distract and withdraw the mind from the unity of the truth, or exciting offences calculated to alienate them from the love of the gospel. The former is effected, when the truth of God is destroyed by doctrines of human invention; the latter, when it is rendered odious or contemptible by the contrivance of various arts. He orders, therefore, a strict watch to be placed on such as adopt either of these methods, with a view to prevent them from deceiving or seizing unawares the faithful, who are off their guard; and he is also desirous that believers should avoid keeping any society with designing men, because ruin and destruction result from their conduct. Nor does he here require this attention from the faithful without cause; for corrupt and vile characters often do much injury to the church from our negligence, before they are opposed; and, if not prevented by great care and prudence, frequently creep in by their surprising craftiness for the purpose of doing mischief. Observe, also, the address is directed to those, who are instructed in the pure doctrine of God; for to separate such as agree in the truth of Christ, is an impious and sacrilegious divorce; but to defend a conspiracy for promoting lies and impious doctrines, under the pretext of peace and unity, is a shameless calumny. The Papists have no foundation for exciting, by artful guile, an unfavourable impression and low opinion of us believers, from this passage; for we do not attack and confute the gospel of Christ, but the

falsehoods of the devil, by which it has hitherto been obscured ; nay, Paul clearly proves that he does not condemn every kind of variance, disagreement, and separation, without exception ; but those, which break in pieces the harmony of the orthodox faith. For the force of the passage lies in the sentence, *which you have learned*, since it was a necessary duty for the Romans to depart from the manner of their country, and the institutions of their ancestors, before they were properly instructed in the principles of the gospel.

*For they that are such*—Paul adds, that a constant mark, and necessary distinction, between false prophets and the servants of Christ, may be found in the former not paying the least regard to the glory of Christ, but minding only their own bellies. Since, however, they creep into the church by craft, and conceal their own wickedness under a false and assumed character, he points out, at the same time, their arts, to prevent any one from being deluded by that smooth and flattering language, which they use as a means for securing to themselves favour. The preachers of the gospel are also distinguished by their own peculiar affability, and pleasantness of manners, but combined, at the same time, with a freedom, which prevents them from wheedling men by vain praises, or alluring them by the indulgence of their vices. But these impostors not only entice the affections of others by flattery, but spare and gratify their vices with a view to attach them more strongly to their own persons. He applies the term *simple* to those, who want sufficient circumspection to avoid the fraudulent arts practised by such deceivers.

*For your obedience is come abroad*—In answer to an objection, which might be adduced against the apostle, that he exhorted the believers at Rome,

because he entertained an unfavourable opinion of their character, he points out to them his desire to prevent their fall, which, without great watchfulness, might easily happen. Paul argues in the following manner: "Your conduct gives me cause for rejoicing over you, since your obedience is indeed so universally praised; because, however, persons often fall, in your case, from simplicity, I am desirous you should be inexperienced and simple in committing evil, but distinguished for the highest prudence in virtue, and the preserving of your integrity whenever it is required." We here see that the simplicity praised in Christians leaves no ground for the pretence of those, who at the present period regard a stupid ignorance of God's word as the highest virtue. For although he approves of the obedient and courteous conduct of the Romans, yet he is desirous they should adopt such prudence and discrimination as would prevent their credulity from being exposed to impostures of any description. He therefore so congratulates them upon their freedom from wickedness, as to manifest his desire of their acting with prudence in avoiding evil. The following expression, *God shall bruise Satan*, is rather a promise for confirming them than a prayer. He exhorts them, therefore, to fight undauntedly, without fear, against Satan, and promises their speedy victory. Our great adversary, indeed, notwithstanding Christ has gained one complete victory over him, is ever ready to renew the engagement; on which account, Paul promises them ultimate success in his overthrow, which never appears during the continuance of the dispute. Paul not only speaks of the last day, when Satan must, without doubt, be utterly trodden under our feet; but as the accuser of the brethren would even then, as it were, unloose and break asunder his reins, and throw every thing into strange confusion

with pride and arrogance, the apostle promises his future subjugation, after a short period, by the Lord, when he would give him to be trampled upon by the feet of the pious. The following prayer for the grace of Christ to continue with them, implies their enjoyment of all those blessings, which have been purchased for us by Christ.

21 Timotheus my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you. 22 I Tertius, who wrote *this epistle*, salute you in the Lord. 23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. 24 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen. 25 Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith;) 27 To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

*Timothy, &c. salute you*—The underwritten salutations are intended both to cherish mutual concord and agreement among those who are situated at a great distance from each other, and also to make the Romans acquainted with the subscription of their brethren in the epistle. Paul indeed had no occasion for the testimony of others, but he derived very considerable advantage from their agreement

and harmony. We find the epistle concluding with praise and thanksgiving to God ; for Paul declares the distinguished kindness of his heavenly Father, in vouchsafing the gentiles the light of the gospel ; and his immense goodness, surpassing all praise, was made manifest in this exhibition of his love. This praise is indeed calculated both to elevate and confirm the confidence of the pious, that, their minds aspiring to God, they may with certainty expect all the blessings which are here committed to him, and confirm also their future hope by his former favours. Since, however, Paul, by collecting many subjects into one sentence, has formed a long period, which is involved by transposing the grammatical order of the words, we will divide the whole into its separate parts. Paul, in the first place, attributes all glory to God alone ; in the second, for the purpose of showing it to be his just due, he incidentally mentions some of his attributes, to make it evident that he alone is worthy to receive every kind of praise. Wisdom is attributed by Paul to God alone ; and by ascribing this praise to him, all other creatures are deprived of this prerogative. Paul, indeed, after having mentioned the secret counsel of God, seems designedly to have added this praise for the purpose of hurrying off his reader, that he might excite in all a reverence and admiration of his divine wisdom. For we know when men do not perceive design in the works of God, how ready they are loudly to display their disapprobation. He affords the Romans more certain information concerning the doctrine of final perseverance, when he adds God's power for confirming their strength. And to make them acquiesce with greater certainty in this power, he adds the evidence borne to it by the gospel, where you see a promise is not only given us of present grace, but we enjoy also a certainty of the

perpetual continuance of this great blessing. For God does not declare in his gospel that he is only our Father for the present, but will continue such to the very last ; nay, his adoption is extended beyond death, for he conducts us to an eternal inheritance. The power and dignity of the gospel are commended by the remaining statements of the apostle. He calls the gospel the preaching of Jesus Christ, as its whole sum is certainly contained in the knowledge of our Redeemer ; its doctrine is denominated a revelation of the mystery, to which we ought not only to listen with more attention, but to impress it on our minds with feelings of the highest veneration. It does not indeed present the pride of wisdom, which is desired by the children of this world, who on this account despise it, but explains the unspeakable treasures of heavenly wisdom, which are more exalted than the powers of the highest genius ; and if angels themselves regard these glories with adoration, wonder, and astonishment, they cannot certainly be held in sufficient admiration by the most exalted of human beings. Nor ought this wisdom to be less valued because it lies concealed under mean and homely simplicity of words, since it has pleased God by such a method to subdue the pride and arrogance of the flesh. But since some doubt might arise how a mystery, suppressed for so many ages, could have appeared and showed itself in such a sudden manner, the apostle informs us neither the rashness of man, nor any fortuitous casualty, but God's eternal ordination, produced it ; where the door is also closed against those questions of mere curiosity, which the frowardness and pride of human genius are apt to propose. For these consider every event, which takes place suddenly and unexpectedly, to occur without design ; and hence often rashly infer that the works of God are absurd, or perplex them-

selves at least with many intricate doubts. Paul therefore admonishes us, that the gospel which had now appeared was decreed by God before the foundation of the world. And to prevent any one from entering into a controversy for the purpose of discrediting the gospel by its novelty, he quotes the writings of the prophets, whose predictions we find to be now fulfilled. For all the prophets bore so clear a testimony to the gospel, that it cannot receive a better confirmation from any other source ; and in this way God has so properly prepared the mind of his people, as to prevent them from feeling astonishment in consequence of the novelty of an unexpected event. If any reader objects that Paul contradicts himself because he says the mystery, to which God bare testimony by the prophets, had been concealed in all ages, Peter gives an easy solution of this difficulty, when he says, the prophets, in their careful inquiries concerning the salvation which was offered to us, ministered the things unto us, and not unto themselves. (1 Peter i. 12.) God therefore was silent in what he spoke at that time, because the revelation of those things, concerning which he wished his servants to prophesy, was kept by him in a state of suspense. In what sense Paul calls the gospel a hidden mystery in this passage, in Eph. iii. 9, and Col. i. 26, is not fully determined even among the learned. The opinion of those who refer it to the calling in of the gentiles is the most forcible, to which Paul himself expressly alludes in his epistle to the Colossians. (Col. i. 27.) I grant this to be one, but not the sole cause ; for I think there is a greater probability in supposing Paul to have regarded other points of difference between the Old and New Testament. For notwithstanding all those subjects had formerly been taught by the prophets which Christ and his apostles ex-

plained, yet they had taught them in such an obscure manner, when compared with this shining splendour of the light of the gospel, that we need not be surprised, if such things as are now done openly are said to have been hidden and concealed. Nor does Malachi (iv. 2) prophesy in vain, that the Sun of Righteousness would arise with healing under his wings ; nor had Isaiah before failed in extolling, with such magnificent and splendid praise, the embassy of the Messiah. Finally, the gospel is not without reason called the kingdom of God ; but we may more properly conclude from the subject itself, that the treasures of heavenly wisdom had been finally then opened, when God appeared, as it were, face to face by means of his own only begotten Son, and dispelled the ancient shadows of the Mosaic dispensation. Paul again states the end and design of preaching the gospel, which was mentioned in the beginning of the first chapter, that God may gather together all nations to the obedience of faith.\*

\* Cold must be the heart of that Briton, who does not rejoice to see his native land, and her descendants, the Americans, made, at this moment, the greatest means for accomplishing this glorious object, by so many and such active Christian Societies. When, however, we remember how little has been done by all Christendom for this purpose, and that the disinterested, amiable, and enlightened Fenelon adduced the lethargy of Protestants in propagating the gospel, as one of the strongest arguments against their system, since the Roman Catholics were at that time more active in this noblest of all objects, surely it is high time for all of us to awake, and with one heart, and one soul, to labour to the utmost in diffusing the kingdom of the gospel of peace. What can seven hundred missionaries do in evangelizing six hundred millions of our fellow-men ? Let all the petty, disgraceful, and ruinous disputes between the various parties of professing Christians be forgotten, and let all our energies be devoted to the conversion of the whole world. Let us pray more, work more—spend more of our time, our talents, our influence, and our money, for this one undivided object; and

we shall soon see New Zealand itself, that land of cannibals, become the abode of gentleness, and of love, and of harmony. Then the Spirit of God shall be poured upon the world from on high, judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field ; the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. All God's people shall dwell in peaceable habitations, in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. (*Isaiah xxxii. 15—18.*)

To what is Britain indebted for all her personal—all her social—all her civil—all her religious liberty ?—To Christianity. To what was Howard indebted for his glory of cleansing, and decorating, and enlarging our prisons, and those of all Europe ?—To Christianity. What powerful motive impelled Wilberforce to break asunder the shackles of the slave ?—Christianity. Let us look at our colleges—our hospitals—our various seminaries of learning—our wonderful discoveries in mind and matter, and ask whence did such blessings flow ?—From Christianity.

Fifty years before the Christian era, Cicero, the orator and the philosopher, advised one of his friends on no account, and for no price, to purchase British slaves, since they would be worse than useless. The Sun of Righteousness shone upon our land. Alfred, one great source of all our glory, translated part of the Scriptures ; the Spirit of holiness visited us in love ; and this same Britain prepared the way for the final emancipation of all slaves. Shall we then confine these blessings to ourselves ? Let us diffuse them to the utmost parts of the earth, by spreading the truths of the Most High ; and all nations, the Jews and Arabs themselves, will rise up and bless us. Let it be the noblest glory, and the most unwearied labour, of every Briton, to place all the world side by side with England and Scotland. To accomplish this we must never cease to use every effort in advancing the cause of Christ, as the only sure and lasting means for drawing down upon us blessings from Infinite Love.

We live in a period of great, and active, and surprising excitement. Reform is in every thing, among all classes, and in all places the order of the day. If our reforms bottom on Christianity, as revealed in the Bible, without a regard to mere human systems and human policy, while we rely simply upon the God of heaven and earth for a blessing upon all the measures now in progress, or hereafter to be adopted, the glory of Britain will rise higher and higher. Let these be forgotten, the incendiaryism, robbery, poisoning, murder ;

nay, even the barbarism of Britain, will increase ; and our splendour will cease with the neglect of our Sabbaths—with the increase of intemperance—with an indifference to family and private prayer—with the want of zeal for the cause of the gospel, and a forgetfulness of those glorious principles which made the apostles and the reformers martyrs to the love of Christ. We talk much about patriotism ; but never let us rely with the least possible confidence on any patriot, however exalted his genius, extensive his learning, profound his erudition, or splendid his eloquence, who does not endeavour, in all his measures, to connect time with eternity, and to make Christianity his unceasing pole star. Guided by this he will be enabled to surmount the greatest difficulties, to set at nought the most dreadful dangers, and to triumph over the most powerful, rich, and determined opposition. The hand of Omnipotence will never desert him ; and he will be honoured by stamping his own principles, and his own character, upon all succeeding ages. The gloom of superstition—the dreams of ignorance—the folly of fanaticism, and the madness of enthusiasm, will fly at his approach. He will spurn the low, mean, corrupt, compromising, and truckling views of a party ; and, guided by the noblest disinterestedness, and the most generous love of mankind, will rely with confidence, in the midst of all contumely and reproach, on the sure approval of future ages. By this system of action the interests and the glory of his country will be united and blended with those of the whole world, and his reward will be a delightful peace of conscience, and the sure prospect of endless happiness.



THE CHARACTER  
OF  
CALVIN.

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FEW writers or divines, in any age, have been more exposed to the calumnies of their enemies, or less flattered by their friends, than John Calvin. His genius, his talents, his learning, his unwearied labour, his persevering activity, and his striking disinterestedness, secured for him no small share in the reformation. His system of church government, which originated in a great measure from the peculiar circumstances of affairs in Geneva, and was extended to France, Scotland, Holland, &c., gave him a more extended influence, and undisputed power, than he would otherwise have obtained, and contributed also to make him an object of hatred to the Roman hierarchy.

A deep and well-founded conviction that he has long laboured in my own country under a heavy load of unmerited obloquy induces me to draw a few outlines of his character. In doing this, I have been guided by all the authentic documents which I could command, without paying any regard to the statements either of his friends or foes.

Timidity, nay, even pusillanimity was one of the most striking features in the natural character of

Calvin. He wanted courage, as a man, to face and encounter the commonest danger, while, as a Christian, he was prepared to meet the violent assaults of the most powerful emperors and monarchs, and to smile, with the most composed complacency, at the grim countenance of the king of terrors in his most horrid forms. He placed no confidence in himself, but depended upon the protection, and guidance, and strength of the arm of Omnipotence. He knew that his own power was nothing; but, relying upon the promises of unchanging Truth and infinite Love, no dominion, however great—no opposition, however violent—made him shrink from his Christian duty, or in any instance either to deny or recant the truth. He rested safe and secure under the panoply of the Lord of Hosts, whether threatened by the blasts of the pope and his minions, or attacked in Geneva by the vilest and most unprincipled of men. His religious and moral courage—the gift of the Holy Spirit—in which he was not surpassed by Luther himself, never forsook him; and he was equally intrepid in exposing what he considered the errors or improper compliances of the most distinguished leaders in the reformation, as he was unflinching in his opposition to every kind of heresy, and every heresiarch whose views diminished the simplicity, undermined the truth, or obscured the glory of the gospel. Our reformer, in carrying on his own unceasing combat with antichrist, used no armour but what he took from the impregnable tower of divine truth, and gloried in no strength, but the love, the righteousness, the grace, and regenerating influences of the Most High.

Calvin, from his earliest years, was unwearied in the pursuit of knowledge, and from the first moment that the book of God was opened to his mind by the Spirit of truth, to the last thread of his existence,

no labour, however great—no study, however arduous—no meditation, however intense, retarded him in his glorious career of doing all in his power for extending the kingdom of heaven. His most violent and implacable enemies have never dared to deny him this praise, and even Voltaire holds him up to the admiration and imitation of mankind for his almost unparalleled industry, and his admirable disinterestedness. If all his published and unpublished works were translated, they would form at least seventy octavo volumes, which were prepared in the midst of constant preaching and lecturing, of unceasing care for the church of God, continued controversies with the opponents of the gospel, arduous struggles for preserving the doctrines and discipline of the church of Geneva, frequent trials from his enemies, and repeated indisposition, during the short period of thirty-one years. He lived and laboured ever mindful of the coming of his Saviour; and was distinguished by study, contemplation, watchfulness, thanksgiving, and prayer.

Calvin's labours were incessant. He delivered more than 300 sermons and lectures every year; and his correspondence, commentaries, controversial writings, and admonitions, &c., would form annually, during the period of thirty-one years, between two and three volumes octavo. The following extract from a letter to Farel, written in 1539, when he published his Commentary on Romans, gives us a clear view of the active character and persevering labours of our reformer. “When the messenger called for my book, I had *twenty* sheets to revise—to preach—to read to the congregation—to write forty-two letters—to attend to some controversies—and to return answers to more than ten persons who interrupted me in the midst of my labours for advice.” If Protestant divines, in the nineteenth century, exhibited

the same perseverance and alacrity in business which distinguished the great luminaries of the reformation, we should not hear of complaints about the increase of the Roman Catholics. The hierarchy of the church of Rome, both in England, in Ireland, and Scotland, can only be overcome by *out-preaching*, *out-praying*, and *out-living* them.

There is no part of the conduct of the reformers more worthy of imitation than their admirable disinterestedness. The following passage from a letter of Calvin to Farel, written in 1539, proves under how great a pressure of poverty his Commentary to the Romans was written. “The Waldensian brethren are indebted to me for a crown, one part of which I lent them, and the other I paid to their messenger, who came with my brother to bring the letter from Sonerius. I requested them to give it you as a partial payment of my debt. I will return you the rest when I am able. My present condition is so very poor, that, I have not one penny. It is singular, although my expenses are so great, that I must still live upon my own money unless I would burden my brethren. It is not easy for me to take that care of my health which you so affectionately recommended.” Had the ministers of the gospel in all ages displayed the same disinterestedness of conduct which marked Calvin, who left only three hundred crowns, even scandal itself could never have accused the clergy of avarice. Had all our archbishops and bishops exhibited the same spirit of love which distinguished the late bishop of Durham, who expended between two and three hundred thousand pounds in religious and benevolent purposes, and in giving money even for the building of Dissenting places of worship, no true Christian could have complained on account of the large annual stipends which the English bishops receive. Let the Dissenting ministers

imitate the conduct of John Wesley, who spent more than twenty thousand pounds in promoting the interests of religion and philanthropy, and died nearly as poor as Calvin ; and the constant example of disinterested conduct, which the clergy of all denominations would then exhibit, could not fail to increase the liberal character of the laymen.

His learning was uncommonly accurate, and so extensive that Scaliger considered him the profoundest scholar since the days of the apostles. No man has made less parade and show of his knowledge, or been more assiduous in rendering it subservient to the great purpose of religion. The defence, illustration, and explanation of the Scriptures formed the great and leading object of his life ; and his writings will ever remain a monument of his zeal and ardour in the cause of God and truth. Although he knew how to appreciate every kind and every department of literature and science, yet he was fully convinced that the treasury of the divine word, which had for so many centuries been concealed from the world by a tyrannical hierarchy, could only be unlocked by the most patient research, and extensive acquaintance with all the stores of ancient and modern knowledge.\*

Few men seem to have possessed a stronger or more retentive memory, both for words and things, than this great luminary of the reformation. Close attention, clearness of thinking, order, frequent repetition, uncommon pleasure, and deep interest, in the great object of his pursuit, gave him an accuracy, extent, and quickness of retentive faculties rarely surpassed. He laid up all his varied stores of learning in well-arranged compartments, and was enabled

\* Which gives a light to every age,  
Which gives, but borrows none.

to take them out for every requisite purpose with great facility and correctness.

His judgment, logical sagacity, and accuracy were in no respect inferior to his memory ; and few writers surpassed him in perceiving the various bearings of the subject which he investigated. He is indebted to this faculty for his uncommon power of generalization and success in making systems, and giving well-digested and clear catechetical instructions, which he highly valued as containing the true seeds of doctrine. All his writings are intended to cast light upon each other, and few authors of any age have exhibited greater uniformity, and consistency of sentiment — one of the surest marks of a sound judgment — than our reformer. Strong expressions occasionally occur, as in all controversial writers ; but by carefully weighing and comparing them with each other, their harshness will be found to be much diminished. The scope, drift, relation, and connexion of a passage rarely escape the minuteness, clearness, and completeness of his discriminative powers.

His imagination is greatly inferior to the other faculties of his mind ; and he very rarely indulges in the fascinations of this delightful and uncommon talent. When he suffers himself to be hurried off by any sudden sallies of this frequently wayward power, he invariably keeps it under the steady curb and unceasing restraint of judgment.

His affections were warm and ardent. As a brother, friend, husband, father, and minister of the word of God, he displayed strong and steady attachment. He carried his brother Anthony to Geneva, and manifested towards him and his family the greatest and steadiest love. After the death of his friend Caurault, he says, in a letter to Farel, “ I am

so overwhelmed that I can put no limits to my sorrow. My daily occupations have no power to retain my mind from recurring to the event, and revolving constantly the impressive thought. The distressing impulses of the day are followed by the more torturing anguish of the night. I am not only troubled with dreams, to which I am inured by habit, but I am greatly enfeebled by those restless watchings which are extremely injurious to my health.”\* Calvin thus writes to Viret on the death of his wife: “I repress, as much as I am able, the sorrow of my heart. With all the exertions of my friends, I effect less in assuaging my grief than I could wish; but I cannot express the consolations which I experience. You know the tenderness of my mind, or rather with what effeminacy I yield under trials; so that without the exercise of much moderation I could not have supported the pressure of my sorrow.” His unceasing efforts for the spiritual improvement of his church, both at Strasburgh and Geneva, leave no doubt of the warmth of his attachment. His friends also invariably manifested their strong love to Calvin, and this affords an undoubted evidence of mutual and reciprocal feelings. The tears of the magistrates and the ministers of Geneva, when he was on his death-bed, supply the clearest and most undoubted proof that he had a warm and a feeling heart.

How, it may be asked, did Calvin comfort himself under his wounded affections? He knew and felt that his light afflictions, which were but for a moment, were working out for him a far more abundant, even an eternal weight of glory. The following

\* Our Reformer thus writes on the death of Bucer, “I feel my heart to be almost torn asunder, when I reflect on the very great loss which the church has sustained on the death of Bucer, and on the advantages that England would have derived from his labours had he been spared to assist in carrying on the Reformation in that kingdom.”

extracts from his letters prove that he relied on no comfort but that of his gracious Saviour.

"The Lord," he writes to Farel, "has spared us to survive Caurault. Let us be diligent to follow his example ;\*" and watchful to tread in the path of increasing light, till we shall have finished our course. Let no difficulties dismay us, or any weight of earthly sufferings impede our progress towards that rest, into which we trust he is received. Without the hope of this glory to cheer us in our way, we shall be overcome with difficulties, and driven to despair. But as the truth of the Lord remains firm and unshaken, so let us abide in the hope of our calling, until the hidden kingdom of God be made manifest." After the death of his wife, he writes to Farel : "I now suppress the sorrow of my heart, and give myself no remission from my official duties.† May the Lord Jesus strengthen me in this so great calamity, which would *inevitably* have overpowered me unless he had stretched forth his hand from heaven, whose office it is to raise the fallen, to strengthen the weak, and to refresh the weary."

Viret, in his answer to Calvin on the death of his wife, thus writes :—"I admire the influence of that divine Spirit which operates in you, and proves himself by his fruits worthy of the name of the true Comforter. Justly may I acknowledge the power of that Spirit in you, since you bear with so composed a mind those domestic misfortunes, which must intimately affect, with the greatest possible severity, your heart, that was *always so readily involved in the calamities of others, and so accustomed to feel them, as if they were your own*. Your example

\* "They mourn the dead, who live as they desired."—YOUNG.

† The Rev. Andrew Fuller commenced writing his excellent treatise, "Calvinism and Socinianism Compared," as a means of solacing his grief for the loss of a beloved partner.

inspires others with new strength, since you can draw consolation from your own trials, and conduct yourself in all the duties of your office, at a time when your sorrows are recent, and have the keenest edge to wound and destroy your constancy, with as much readiness and ease as when all was well.\* May the exuberant grace of divine goodness, from which proceed all those other gifts, that the Lord hath so richly bestowed upon you, supply your own mind with resolution to bear this cross.” His feelings for the church at Geneva when he was most unjustly banished by them, show the ardour of his attachment to the church of God, which had once been intrusted to his care. In a letter to Viret, he says, “ My thoughts relative to the arduous office of governing the church, disturb and perplex my mind with various anxieties ; but their influence will not prevent me from doing every thing which I judge best for its welfare. Nothing is more conformable to my wishes and desires than to give up *my life in the discharge of my duty*. I entreated our friends with tears, that, omitting all consideration of me, they should consult, in the presence of God, what would be most beneficial to the church of Geneva.”

Calvin thus writes on this subject in the Preface to his Commentary on the Psalms. “ The obligation and responsibility of my office determined me to restore myself to the flock from which I had been violently separated ; and the best of Beings is my witness with what depth of sorrow, abundance of tears, and extreme anxiety, I entered upon my office.”

To what was Calvin indebted for all the courage,

\* The steady performance of our various duties, domestic, social, professional, and Christian, is one of the most powerful and certain means, with the joy and consolation of the Spirit of God, to enable us to bear up under any bereavements.

learning, industry, and success, which he possessed ? To a deep and settled piety. After leaving the darkness and superstitions of popery, he gave up his undivided attention to the sacred records of the divine will. Nor did he study them for the purpose of confirming his mind in preconceived opinions, but of discovering the counsels, the plans, the truths of infinite wisdom. His great design was to follow the Lamb of God whithersoever he went. Hence, by the illumination of the divine Spirit, that confidence and full assurance of faith, which he so strongly insists on and so beautifully describes. Hence that noble heroism, with which he pursued the onward tenour of his course, in breaking down the barriers of popery, and building up the exalted and stately pillars of the reformation. He knew the power of the divine word, that it was able to bring down all high thoughts in subjection to the dominion of Christ, and to overcome all principalities and powers. Hence his numerous commentaries, and his unwearied expositions, both by lectures and by preaching, of the word of God. To this, and this alone, was he indebted for the confidence with which he met all his enemies and all his trials ; with which he faced all the combined artifice and violence of the Roman Catholics, and the various sects and heresies rising out of the bosom of the reformation itself.

Calvin, on his death-bed, looked back, with a self-approving conscience, to the labours in which he had been engaged ; and though he condemns himself for displaying too great violence of temper on certain occasions, never once complains of self-accusation on account of the death of Servetus, or of any other part of his arduous labours in opposing Castellio, or others. Conscience has two great offices to perform, and in one capacity it acts as an *accuser* and a *Judge*, in the other as a *director* and a *guide*. The improper use of this

guide of our thoughts and actions has been the occasion and the cause of more suffering, and persecution, and misery, than almost all other causes put together. To this we must trace the error and the sin of the disciples John and James, when they wished to call down fire from heaven, and our beloved Saviour told them that they knew not what spirit they were of. To this we must attribute the persecution of pagan and papal Rome; and the first reformers themselves derived from this extensive source of error, of sin, and of crime, the persecuting principles by which they were all influenced. Although Calvin had escaped from the deep abyss of popish darkness, he still continued to be enthralled and awfully deluded by the horrid principle of persecution which he placed in the hands of the civil magistrate, as the church of Rome vested it in their ruinous, ignorant, and corrupt hierarchy. Had the church of Geneva been separated from the state, Calvin would never have thought of placing in the hands of the clergy of that city the power of punishing the blasphemy of Servetus as a capital crime, since simple excommunication was the *extreme* punishment, which the consistory could inflict. Our reformer was so thoroughly convinced of the power of the magistrates extending to blasphemy against God, that he declares the apostles themselves, had the government under which they lived been Christian, would have abetted and sanctioned persecution. The true follower of the meek and lowly Jesus must be compelled to shed tears over this pernicious and altogether with less principle, which was adopted and maintained by all the great leaders of the reformation. Nay, the very same persecution has been continued in England until the other day, when Taylor and Carlile were liberated from prison. May no Briton ever again have cause to lament over this

antichristian conduct on the part of a government, which is professedly in league and alliance with the ecclesiastical establishment of the country. The great and peculiar glory of Christianity is love to God and love to man, founded on the principle of faith in a dying, risen, and interceding Saviour, who will finally come in the character of a Judge to separate the goats from the sheep, and to assign to each their portion in endless happiness or misery. It does not confide in the arm of man, in the power of emperors or of kings for success, but looks up with unbounded confidence to the Lord of Sabaoth for final victory and triumph.

Calvin was not influenced by any feelings of private revenge, or of personal malevolence against Servetus, as many, contrary to all the evidence of the truth of history and biography, have asserted. He was anxious to remove all heretical opinions, and to watch over the purity of the faith of the church at Geneva, as well as of all the protestant churches. This was one cause of his bringing Servetus to trial, and his desire to convince him of the error of his opinions, and to convert him to the belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, was another. All the Swiss Protestant churches concurred with that of Geneva in sanctioning the punishment of the Spanish physician. Calvin was desirous that his punishment should have been less ignominious, and not burning, but the magistrates of Geneva opposed this measure.

It is unfair, uncandid, and ungenerous, to lay the whole weight of persecution, as many Englishmen do, upon the shoulders of Calvin.\* Lambert and

\* The following extract from a letter of the mild Melanchthon to Calvin proves what his opinions were concerning persecution. "I have read your clear refutation of the horrid blasphemies of Servetus, and I thank the Son of God who awarded you a crown of victory in this combat. The

Askew were burnt in the reign of Henry VIII.; Vane Pare and Joan of Arc, by Edward VI., at the instigation and urgent solicitation of Archbishop Cranmer, a pattern of humility, meekness, and charity, at Smithfield, London, three years before Servetus suffered at the Champel of Geneva. Two Anabaptists were capitally punished under Elizabeth, and sixty Roman Catholics : Legate and Wightman, two Arians, under James I. Cold must be the heart that does not feel, and tearless the eyes that do not sympathize with all the victims of persecution under Charles I. and II.

The distinction which Servetus has attained for his various writings, particularly as the discoverer of the pulmonic circulation of the blood before our illustrious Harvey, has contributed to make his trial and punishment more conspicuous, while those who suffered in England have been little noticed in consequence of their ignorance and want of celebrity. Our reformer has been calumniated without mercy and justice, and with all the rancour of malevolence and fury, by many of our anonymous compilers of biographical Dictionaries. Even Dr. Lampriere, in his Universal Biography, makes the most unfounded assertion, contrary to all the authentic evidence of history, that two long hours elapsed while Servetus was burning at the stake. Is such conduct worthy of the generosity for which my countrymen are so justly renowned?

church owes you a debt of gratitude even at the present moment, and will owe it to the *latest posterity*. I perfectly assent to your opinion. Your magistrates did right in punishing, after a regular trial, this blasphemer." In this very letter Melancthon speaks of Calvin "as a lover of truth, and as having a mind free from hatred and other unreasonable passions." Melancthon, in a letter to Bullinger, writes, "I wonder at those who disapprove of the severity of the sentence of the Genevese senate against Servetus, for they were perfectly right, since he could never cease blaspheming.

What has Calvin done to merit such treatment from any of the natives of the British isles, or of Ireland herself? We are indebted for all our psalmody in the church of England to Calvin, who fostered with parental care the English exiles under the persecution of Queen Mary; and these refugees annexed the Psalms, versified and set to music, to a translation of the Scriptures in the English language, made chiefly by Coverdale, Goodman, Knox, Gibbs, Sampson, Cole, and Whittingham. This Version of the Psalms soon superseded the *Te Deum*, *Benedicite*, *Magnificat*, *Nunc Dimittis*, which had been retained until that time in the church of England from that of Rome. Had Calvin done nothing else for us than this, he deserved at least to have received fair treatment at our hands.

Not satisfied with this, Calvin used every effort in his power, by correspondence with Peter Martyr, Bucer, Fagius, Cranmer, Sir William Cecil, Sir John Cheke, the Lord Protector of England, and others, to have the liturgy of that church improved. He dedicated also his Commentary on Isaiah, and the Canonical Epistles, to Edward the Sixth, who is justly compared with King Josiah; and he points out to him the great value and importance of the Scriptures, as the only certain means for subverting the kingdom of antichrist. He dedicates also one Edition of his Commentaries on Isaiah to Elizabeth. In his letter to the Protector, he strongly approves of a liturgy, since it would establish a more certain agreement of all the churches among themselves, check the instability and levity of innovators, and detect the introduction of new opinions by an immediate appeal to such a standard. He objects against prayers for the dead, the use of chrism, and extreme unction. "Religion," he writes, "cannot be restored to its purity while the spurious and counterfeit Christianity of popery, that

sink of pollution, is only partially drawn off, and a frightful form of the religion of Jesus is embraced for the pure and original faith." In the concluding part of his letter he points out the necessity of maintaining the honour of God in punishing fornication, adultery, cursing, and drunkenness.

Does not Calvin merit the praise of every true-hearted Englishman, for recommending such reformation to the uncle of King Edward? Nay, is it not high time that something more effectual be at present done by the state, in checking drunkenness, if it takes any interest either in the religious or moral improvement of our country? In some parts of the kingdom, there is a public-house or a tavern for a population of one hundred inhabitants; and, if we allow one for every three hundred, the places as receptacles for drinking will amount to seventy thousand, which is more than three times the number of all the clergymen belonging to the Established Church in Great Britain and Ireland. Have we a right to consider that government as paying the least regard to the morals or religion of a country, which sanctions and licenses such a disproportionate and unnecessary number of abodes for the drunkard, or the licentious? Surely it is high time that something else be done for our native land, than the continued following up of a system, which raises so large a portion of the taxes of the country, by encouraging drunkenness, which destroys the health, the morals, the religion of the country, and is more effectual in destroying *domestic* comfort and happiness, than all other schemes of demoralization combined. How many families are there among us, which can produce some husband, brother, or son, who have fallen martyrs to this most degrading and brutalizing of all vices. When will a reformed parliament be able to

say that the following line of Cowper cannot be applied to them,—

“ Ye all can swallow, and they ask no more.”\*

Calvin’s uncommon care for all the Protestant churches in Europe, merits the highest praise. His various letters, dedications, exhortations, written to every nation of any eminence, where the true principles of the gospel had been introduced, afford a lasting proof of his ardour and zeal in promoting genuine Christianity.

His letters to John Knox, the Scotch reformer, prove his earnest zeal for the spiritual welfare of that part of the kingdom ; and I am sure none, who has had the happiness, which I have experienced, of residing in that land of kindness, hospitality, education, morality, and religion, can entertain a moment’s doubt of the great advantages which Scotland has derived from the reformer of Geneva. It is, however, not a little singular, that no distinguished author in that kingdom, with whose writings I am acquainted, has done any thing of importance, either in vindicating the character of Calvin from the unjust aspersions of his calumniators, or in translating any of his writings. They have been more desirous to impress his own character on themselves and their countrymen, than to exhibit to future ages a full and graphic delineation of every lineament and feature which distinguish this luminary of the reformation. I trust the time is not distant when one of the ablest biographers of the age—whose kindness I must ever cherish with the most grateful feelings—to whom

\* It is truly gratifying to learn that the Duke of Wellington is doing his utmost to destroy its ravages among our soldiers. Should he, in any measure, conquer this horrid vice, he will be a greater benefactor to his country, than even by his glorious achievements at Waterloo.

Knox and Melville stand indebted for such a just, impartial, and correct view of all their labours, studies, and attachment to the gospel and their country,—will be equally successful in doing complete justice to their great master and leader in the cause of truth and righteousness.

It yet remains for Scotland to rise as one man, and to demand from a reformed parliament the same freedom in the electing of the ambassadors of the Most High, which has been lately granted them in the appointment of their county and city members. Religion never will, and never can flourish in its full extent, until the whole united empire shall feel a deeper interest in the appointment of ministers of the gospel, than in the choice of any civil officer, however high or powerful. It may be doubted whether even a tenth part of all the archbishops, bishops, deans, priests, deacons, and ministers of the word of God, in every part of the kingdom, are elected by the people. Surely then religion cannot be made a personal consideration, while so large a part of the inhabitants appears to rest satisfied with such spiritual guides, directors, and comforters, as the caprice, or interest, or party feelings of the Government, or of other patrons, shall appoint. This state of things must be altered, if we ever expect to behold a lasting and soul-stirring change in the religious character and views of the whole empire. All the Churchmen and Dissenters in the United Kingdom should use every exertion to inspire their hearers with a deep sense of the importance and actual necessity of selecting on all occasions their own spiritual instructors.

Ireland herself bears ample testimony, in the province of Ulster, to the advantages which she has derived from the industry, manufactures, education, and religion, introduced into that country by the followers

of Calvin; and we hope the time is not far distant when the wrongs of that oppressed nation will be redressed, and the glorious principles of unadulterated Christianity produce their genuine effect, and seat her side by side with her two sisters, England and Scotland.

Nor is Calvin entitled to receive common justice at the hand of Britons, merely on account of his labours for promoting our greatest blessings, by advancing the cause of religion. Hume—whose opinion was not in danger of being warped by any love to Christianity—has clearly proved, in his reign of Elizabeth, that we are chiefly indebted for our liberties to the stand which the Dissenters, who were generally Calvinists, made against the arbitrary measures of that illustrious queen. The friends of slavery are entitled to do their utmost against John Calvin; but no lover of freedom—no true Briton—no genuine Irishman—no real patriot, can or dare lay his hand on his heart, and say he has cause to withhold from our reformer his merited share of praise.

Louis the Eleventh wished his son to know merely one sentence, “that dissimulation is a necessary ingredient in the character of a monarch, without which he cannot rule.” Politicians alone know to what extent this principle has influenced their councils. All divines, however, if they wish to have the least claim for that title, ought to adopt Calvin’s device, “*promptly and sincerely.*”\* To these two prin-

\* He exhibited both these characters in the trial of Servetus. Promptness induced him to have this heresiarch arrested on a Sunday; Calvin’s calumniators and revilers have falsely stated, when Servetus was at church. Our reformer maintained with all the leading pillars of the reformation, contrary to the character, and principles, and spirit of the Lamb of God, the Saviour of sinners, that blasphemy ought to be punished by the civil magistrate, and, as a freeman of Geneva, considered himself bound to impeach Servetus. Sincerity,

ciples, guided by the light of the gospel, and the piety and boldness it inspired, we may trace all that perseverance, all that heroism and magnanimity with which he assailed the strong holds of popery, and dared to point out to the greatest potentates of Europe the conduct which they ought to pursue.

Weak, timid, pusillanimous, and effeminate as Calvin was by nature, when guided by the Spirit of

and an earnestness of zeal to prevent the spread of erroneous principles, led him, therefore, to have Servetus arrested and tried by the magistrates, but Calvin never uttered a word concerning his punishment. Sufficient time was granted the Spanish physician for carrying on his trial, but, contrary to the voice of humanity and of justice, no advocate was allowed by the senate of Geneva, and his jail exhibited a mass of squalid filth, which Howard alone could have assisted to remove; for he is the only Christian, since the days of the apostles, who seems to have fully entered into the glorious practice of visiting the prisoner in his abodes of the deepest wretchedness and destitution. Servetus, on his trial condemned by the natural standing court of his own conscience, and declared guilty by its verdict, acknowledged his hypocrisy in attending mass when at Vienne, although he at that time considered the pope to be antichrist. The torments of the flames, with all their horrors, the entreaties and admonitions of Calvin, whose pardon Servetus begged only two hours before his death, never induced him to think he was in an error; but he died in the same sincere conviction of the truth of his opinions, as he had lived. Had all the reformers attended mass, like Servetus, the Roman hierarchy would never have been shaken; and had the first reformers understood the nature, enlarged the dimensions, and beheld the real deformities, and monstrous stings of persecution, they would never have been disgraced, or become a stumbling-block to others, by the *seeming goodness* of this principle which Christ utterly loathes. May the writer and readers of this note be enabled to understand that heavenly wisdom of divine love, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; and to practise its dictates with promptness and sincerity, guided by the voice of a truly enlightened, and, in every respect, Christian conscience.

God, no danger dismayed him, no enemy arrested his progress. Our reformer manifested the greatest candour and sincerity to the meek and gentle Melancthon, when he freely admonished him of his too accommodating character, from a fear of being accused of harshness by the enemies of the gospel. In writing to Melancthon, Calvin says, "The trepidation of a general, or leader of an army, is more ignominious than the flight of common soldiers. All will condemn your wavering as insufferable. Give, therefore, a steady example of invincible constancy. The servants of Christ should pay no more regard to their reputations than their lives. I do not suppose you are eager, like ambitious men, for popular applause. I, however, ingenuously open my mind to you, lest that truly divine magnanimity\* with which, otherwise, you are richly endowed, should be impeded in its operations. I would sooner die a thousand deaths with you, than see you survive the doctrine which you illustrate and deliver. Be solicitously watchful, lest impious cavillers take the opportunity of assailing the gospel from your flexible disposition." He displays the same sincerity when speaking of his own temper, which was constitutionally susceptible of quick emotions, and frankly acknowledges that he had not succeeded in his struggles to conquer his impatience and irritability. "My exertions," he says, "have not been entirely useless, although I have not been able to conquer the ferocious animal." Calvin never lost sight of the future advancement and prosperity of the church of God, which his commentaries, controversies, admonitions, and other labours, were calculated to promote with the quickest promptness, and the frankest sincerity.

\* Every reader of Melancthon's Letter to Henry the Eighth must feel thoroughly convinced that his heroic feelings were entirely Christian.

Calvin's opinions on all the principal subjects of evangelical truth, and the leading controversies of that period, were the same with those which were entertained by Luther, and the most distinguished leaders in the reformation. Even Melancthon writes, in a letter to Calvin, speaking of predestination ; "I know that these remarks agree with your opinions ; but mine, since they are less refined, are better adapted to common use." In another part of the same letter Melancthon says, "In beautifying the great and essential doctrines of the Son of God, I wish you to exercise your eloquence, since it is able to confirm your friends, to terrify your enemies, and assist such as may be saved. For whose eloquence *in reasoning* is more nervous and splendid ?" Were not Bucer and Peter Martyr employed in carrying on the reformation in England ? Are not their opinions the same, on all contested points, with Calvin's ? Why then should the Arminians of Holland and Great Britain labour to cast the whole blame upon Calvin ? Did not Archbishop Usher, Bishop Hall, the judicious Hooker, entertain the same theological creed ? It is surely high time that these able champions of the same opinions should bear some part of the blame, *if they deserve censure*, with our weak and emaciated reformer. Theological hatred, the most virulent and deadly of all, has been long dealt out without measure, or justice, or truth, against the Genevese reformer in England, a nation justly distinguished for generosity ; but the time, it may be hoped, is not far distant, when new Horsleys will be raised up to break in pieces the arrows of calumny, and to make all the followers of the Prince of peace and truth ashamed to join the ranks of the infidels, in using the poisoned weapons of shameless detraction for the purpose of vilifying the character of one of the most holy—the

most undaunted—the most laborious, and the most disinterested followers of a crucified Redeemer.

Calvin's great excellence as a commentator consists in his giving, first, a concise, clear, full, and minute view of the scope, drift, and connexion of the whole passage he is explaining, with the accuracy and precision of uncommon logical sagacity and acuteness. He then, in the second place, generally analyzes the sense of each word, and points out its appropriate meaning in the sentence where it occurs. He uses, without any display, his immense stores of learning, for the purpose of illustrating what is dark, enlightening what is obscure, and confirming what is doubtful. His great object is to get to the pith of the subject under his consideration, and to break the shell, that he may give his readers the kernel. He approaches the only record in which Infinite Truth addresses lost mankind with all the feelings of sacred awe, but without superstitious dread; and his sole aim is to discover, by every possible means in his power, what was the mind of the Spirit, without labouring to make the Scriptures bend to his own prejudices, or to support his pre-conceived opinions. His Harmonies of the Law and Writings of Moses, and of the Gospel, display the accuracy and extent of his research, which is only surpassed by the correctness of his judgment. His views of Christian morality, in his various commentaries, are distinguished by a holy simplicity, which scorns to fritter away the principles of eternal wisdom, or to accommodate the unerring maxims of the gospel to the manners, customs, or practices of the world. The great aim of Calvin, in his numerous expositions, was to dispel the clouds of popish darkness by the glorious light and splendour of the word of the Most High.

None of the reformers understood the advantages

of education more clearly than Calvin ; and the establishment of an excellent seminary in Geneva, both for human and divine learning, was one of the last actions of his life. Even now, when Geneva has generally deserted the standards of the original reformers, and joined those of Arius or Socinus, her sons rejoice in the great triumph achieved by the wisdom of Calvin over the power of Napoleon, who, on conquering Geneva, wanted courage to make any change in the system of education, which had been planned more than 200 years before Buonaparte was born by this distinguished friend of genuine Christianity, and of a truly scriptural education.\*

Beza has left nothing to be added to his account of Calvin's death. Our reformer's unshaken confidence in his Redeemer, care for the prosperity of the state of Geneva, and the interests of religion in that city, afford a noble and unanswerable testimony to the piety and integrity of his life. May it be the constant prayer and labour of every Christian so to live that he may die the death of Calvin, and reposing with unshaken confidence in the promises of his Immanuel, triumph with unutterable joy in the prospects of that happiness which is prepared in the mansions of eternal peace and harmony for all that love the appearing of the King of glory.

\* The Life of Calvin, by the Rev. Mr. Scott, is written with much judgment and impartiality.

## REMARKS

ON THE

### PRECEDING COMMENTARY.

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CALVIN wrote this Commentary in 1539, the same year when he published the second edition of his Institutes, with a view to make each illustrate the other. Nor did he cease during twenty-five years to follow up the same plan, that his Commentaries might form a mirror to his Institutes.

The following extract from Arminius, whom all must regard as an impartial judge, proves the high opinion which he entertained of Calvin's Commentaries :—“ I exhort students to read, after the holy Scriptures, Calvin's Commentaries, who is incomparable in the interpretation of the sacred volume ; and his expositions ought to be more highly valued than all the writings of the ancient Christian Fathers ; so that, in a certain eminent spirit of prophecy, I give him the pre-eminence beyond most—nay, all others.”

The epistle of Paul to the Romans exhibits one of the finest specimens of close reasoning, and the most beautiful chain of argumentation, that is to be met with in any writer. He establishes in the most incontrovertible manner, both by facts and testimonies, the utter depravity, and the lost and ruined state of man, whether living under the beams of the splendour of revelation, or in the darkness and ignorance of polytheism. The writings of Cicero, particularly his Epistles, of Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Suetonius, and Tacitus, afford the most satisfactory evidence of the awful depravity of the heathen world. Josephus leaves us no doubt of the corrup-

tion of the Jewish nation, which is fully confirmed by the testimony of heathen authors.\* Principal Edwards, one of the ablest metaphysicians of any age, in his unanswered work on Original Sin, has left us the best and fullest exposition of the fifth chapter of this epistle ; and it ought to be carefully read by every student of theology, who is desirous to acquire habits of correct thinking, and to extend his acquaintance with the nature and character of man.

The salvation of infants is ably discussed by the Rev. Mr. Russel, Dundee, and the Rev. Mr. Bruce, of the Necropolis, Liverpool. Any reader desirous to enter more fully into the various opinions of the ancients concerning this subject, may consult Dr. Wall on Infant Baptism, where he will find sufficient to gratify his curiosity. The doctrine maintained by Fulgentius, that children, " who die before birth, or without baptism, are consigned to the eternal punishment of everlasting fire," will at present meet, we hope, with no advocates among the disciples of the gospel of the Son of God.

Bishop Hopkins, the judicious Hooker, Dr. Owen, Edwards, Witherspoon, Hervey, have illustrated the doctrine of justification by faith with a luminous

\* Mere classical studies have rarely improved the morals of the scholar. What good can arise from a knowledge of all the crimes and vices of the gods and goddesses of antiquity? Should all our teachers illustrate the Scriptures by the writers of Greece and Rome, these depositaries of ancient wisdom and polite literature would contribute to give us a more extended and enlarged acquaintance with our own hearts and human nature, and thus confirm our faith in the grace and truth of the gospel. The study of the Greek writers, of the Septuagint, and Josephus, in conjunction with the Greek of the New Testament, would be the means of making better biblical critics, and sounder Christians. When will the time come that the word of God will be felt and appreciated by all as the best gift to ruined sinners?

precision, and accurate reasoning, that cannot fail to give satisfaction to every unprejudiced inquirer, who is desirous to become acquainted with that important article of our holy religion. Howe's Living Temple, and Owen on the Spirit, will afford an ample field of discussion on the operations and sanctification of the Spirit; and it ought ever to be remembered that the errors, corruptions, and superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church never can be sufficiently understood, unless a solid foundation has been laid in a minute investigation of the person, influence, and work of the Holy Ghost, as a comforter, witness, guide, and instructor.

The works of the Rev. Mr. Dickenson of America, and of Mr. Frazer merit the close perusal of such as are desirous to make themselves acquainted with Paul's views in the seventh chapter, which were understood by Luther, Zwingle, and the other leading reformers in the sense given by Calvin and Augustine. Mr. Burkitt, in his Exposition of the New Testament, has some valuable practical observations on this chapter.

The eighth chapter has, in all ages of the Christian church, afforded comfort to the afflicted, strength to the weak, joy to the sorrowful, confidence to the desponding, and triumph to the Christian confiding in the Captain of his salvation. Calvin had nearly the same view of a new heaven and a new earth, which Dr. Chalmers has given in one of his sermons.\* By limiting the sense of our being conformed to the image of Christ to the trials and suf-

\* Did not our gracious Redeemer wish to prevent us from dwelling on locality with respect to heaven, when he tells us, in regard to one of our dearest earthly relations, we shall be like angels? Can any good be expected to arise from such opinions concerning another world, as induce us to institute a comparison between it and the present? Has not this been the cause of many errors in the Christian world? Is it not the great object of the gospel to spiritualize our minds,

ferings of the believer in this world, Calvin shows his freedom from a desire to support any pre-conceived opinion by wresting the Scripture to serve a purpose. The quotations, which I have given from Peter Martyr, clearly prove that Calvin's opinions on the subject of election and reprobation were entertained by this distinguished divine, who assisted in the English reformation. St. Paul's prophetic view, that the gospel would be rejected by the Jews until the fulness of the gentiles should come in, has been thus far verified. He points also to the awful declension from primitive Christianity, which has taken place at Rome itself, and thus afforded, not only the strongest warning to that city, but to all the gentiles, of the necessity of making the word of God alone the standard of our faith in doctrine, discipline, and manners. When shall we behold all Protestants labouring as much to convert the Jews as Paul himself, alone and single-handed, did to Christianize the heathen world?

Calvin's observations on the five last chapters afford a clear proof of his excellence as a moral commentator; and how vain all those objections are which have been adduced against the morality of the system established by the first reformers. These doctrines, and these alone, are calculated to give peace to the conscience, to enlarge our views of the divine character and economy, to enable us to gain a victory and triumph over ourselves, and to open for us a scene of endless joy in a world beyond the grave. The bold, unflinching preaching of these opinions has carried light, and truth, and happiness, and peace, to the remotest regions of the globe.

when they dwell on the nature, characters, happiness, and joys of the ransomed in endless glory? Does not the undefined state of heaven, as represented in Scripture, contribute to add to the evidence of the gospel, when it is contrasted with an heathen Elysium, or a Mahometan paradise?

Immorality the most abandoned, polytheism the most awful, superstition the most gross, and ignorance the most stupid, have, by the proclaiming of these truths, been changed to knowledge, virtue, the fear and love of God, the Saviour, Redeemer, Preserver, and Creator of the world.

Salmasius, one of the most learned men of any age, was, on his death-bed, desirous to have his life lengthened for a single year, that he might devote it to the study of the Psalms, and of St. Paul's epistles. This distinguished scholar then found, that all his learning could avail nothing, when the king of terrors, staring him in the face, held him in his last and final embrace; and he bequeathed to the most ignorant scholar one valuable lesson—to seek for a conquest over death and the grave, by studying, under the guidance of the Spirit, the records of the King of heaven and earth.\* The precepts and the promises of David are useful for our direction, support, and comfort, in the duties, joys, sufferings, and afflictions of time; and his hosannas and hallelujahs form the best and most delightful preparations for heaven. Paul, while he points out the depth, extent, and inveterate malignity of our corruptions, leads us to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, that we may fight the fight of faith under the banners of our Redeemer, and by obtaining a conquest over ourselves, the world, and the devil, may be ready, after finishing our course with patience, love, and joy, to receive a crown incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. Thus a preparation will be made for that kingdom, where we shall see God as he is, be like him, and enjoy him for ever.

\* The very busiest of mortals has no cause to complain of the size of the divine volume, since by reading three chapters each day of the week, and five on the sabbath, the whole may be completed in one year. The Psalms, and all the New Testament, except three chapters, will be finished by reading one chapter daily, and two each Sabbath.

# NOTES

## TO THE LIFE OF CALVIN.

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(a) Mathurin Cordier, Cordery, or Corderius, was distinguished for his piety, learning, and probity. Few men, in any age, were more successful or indefatigable teachers than he was ; and he invariably laboured to combine true religion and morality with the improvement of the understanding. He was born 1479, and died at Geneva, September 8, 1564. He studied divinity for some time at Paris, about 1528 ; and was indebted, under Providence, to Robert Stephens, for a complete emancipation from the errors and superstitions of Popery. He spent upwards of fifty years in teaching, at Paris, Nevers, Bourdeaux, Geneva, whence he was banished the same year with Calvin, at Neuchatel, Lausanne, where they wished to have placed him at the head of the college ; but the inhabitants of Neuchatel, where he then taught, would not part with him. He concluded his laborious career of teaching in Geneva, and taught the sixth form till within three or four days of his death, aged eighty-five. He taught according to the monitorial system, and educated 600 boys with more order and silence than are observed by most teachers who have only thirty or forty. The reformers displayed an indefatigable zeal for promoting education, and never failed to make it serve as an handmaid to religion. What an awful declension has taken place in this respect among the Protestants of the nineteenth century ! Something is doing, and has already been done for the religious education of the lower classes, while the middling and the higher are frequently altogether neglected in this most important branch of instruction. We trust the time is not distant when every good classical school will pay so much attention to the Old and New Testament, even in some of the higher departments of biblical criticisms, as to compel all our colleges to assume a more distinguished stand in one of the most im-

portant branches of literature. What a disgrace that Britain should be so much surpassed by Germany in this truly useful study ! Shall we not be roused by our American descendants?\*

Calvin, in 1550, dedicated to Cordier his Commentary on the first epistle to the Thessalonians, and acknowledged himself indebted to this admirable Latin grammarian for all his future skill in that language. "I take this opportunity," he writes, "to testify to posterity, that, if they derive any benefit from my writings, they must in a great measure acknowledge it to have flowed from your instructions." The system of education in the High School of Edinburgh, which has been adopted with so much success nearly all over Scotland, appears very much to resemble in its general arrangement what was followed by Cordier.

His colloquies, long continued even in Britain, the first stepping-stone in the ascent to the temple of learning ; and Dr. Reynolds recommends them, as useful in assisting to enable classical scholars to speak Latin, in which we have been so much surpassed by our continental neighbours.

I look back with delight to the time when I began the study of Cordery under one of the most affectionate of tutors and friends, the Rev. Mr. Hair of Torpenhow, Cumberland, whose attainments, as a sound classical scholar, were of no ordinary character. I spent four years of very great happiness under his truly parental roof. A striking humility, and the most unassuming manners, distinguished every part of his conduct. Gentleness was his chief means for conveying knowledge, and the plan of severity never once entered his mind. He was curate of the present bishop of Bath and Wells, who afterwards promoted him to Hayton. Mr. Hair was much beloved by his parishioners, in spite of the collection of tithes, which have contributed more than any other cause to secularize our clergy, to create discord between them and their flocks, to paralyze the exertions of the farmers and the peasantry—"their country's pride"—to augment the number, add to the influence, and strengthen the power of the dissenters. From Bishop Hall, to whom I was introduced by my instructor in English, the Rev. Mr. Parsable, in consequence of the bishop being a school-fellow with Mr. Hair, and of his high opinion of Mr. Parsable, I experienced at Dublin all the attention, watchfulness, and care of a parent. I enjoyed the use of his library, and he directed my studies. Few men displayed a greater sense of principle, or a stronger

\* Professor Stuart's Critical Remarks on the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews are truly valuable.

hatred and abhorrence of party ; and by opposing the union of Ireland with England, though a native of Great Britain, he was prevented for some time from becoming either provost or bishop. I was placed by him under Dr. Davenport, one of the kindest and best of tutors, in a college distinguished for the liberality, kindness, and generosity, that characterize the whole Irish nation ; and I must ever remember, with much pleasure, the interest he took in promoting my studies. My oldest brother, my friend, my guide, and my teacher, was the cause of advising one of the best and tenderest of mothers, to whose uncommon affection I am indebted under Providence for all the blessings I now enjoy, to place me under the Rev. Mr. Hair. My dearest mother and the Rev. Mr. Parsable alone survive of all these kind friends, relations, and instructors ; and may the Saviour of sinners long continue her to me as a comfort, and fit her for the enjoyment of that kingdom, where there is neither sin, nor sorrow, nor woe.

My first tutor in English, the Rev. Mr. Parsable, acted towards me on all occasions with the greatest friendship, and I am happy to have this opportunity of testifying my deep gratitude for his instructions. His sole aim through life has been the promotion of useful knowledge, and of kindness of feeling in every situation which he has filled. May he be preserved in the enjoyment of undiminished health, to promote the happiness of his parishioners, until the Master of the harvest shall translate him from his present labours to reap the glories of an endless and all-perfect immortality.

(b) Robert d'Olivet, a relation of Calvin, was born at Noyon ; and published at Neuchatel, in 1535, the first French Bible ever printed in Switzerland, and translated from the Hebrew and Greek, in consequence of the decree of the synod of the churches in the valleys of Piedmont. He was banished from Geneva, where he was tutor in a gentleman's family, in consequence of his defending the Lutherans against the attack of a Dominican friar, and withdrew to Neuchatel. He died at Ferrara, having, it is supposed, been poisoned at Rome, on account of his activity as a reformer and translator of the Scriptures, in 1536 or 1538. Calvin wrote, in French, at Neuchatel, 1536, the preface to the Old Testament, addressed to all the emperors, kings, princes, and nations, subject to the dominion of Christ. He wrote also the preface to the New. We behold, in the Life of Robert d'Olivet, of Calvin, of Cordier, and of Robert Stephens, how powerful an influence the translation of the Scriptures, printing, classical

literature, and education had on each other in advancing the cause of the reformation.

(c) Few men have displayed their sense of gratitude in their dedications more than Calvin. He dedicates his Commentary on the first of Thessalonians to Cordier, because he had been his instructor in Latin ; his second epistle to the Corinthians to Wolmar, as his Greek tutor ; the epistle to the Romans to Grynée, as his director and adviser in the method of writing commentaries ; and the second of Thessalonians to his physician Textor, who had paid the greatest attention to his wife's health, and his own, without fee or reward. None can doubt Calvin's gratitude, after stating these facts ; and he displays the utmost candour in bearing testimony to their assistance.

Wolmar was a native of Switzerland. He was an excellent Greek scholar, and Calvin and Beza were indebted to him for their knowledge of this language. He taught Latin and Greek at Bourges. Tubingen enjoyed his labours in Greek and civil law for more than twenty years. He wrote commentaries on the first two books of Homer's Iliad, and an elegant preface to Chalcondyla's Greek Grammar. He was an excellent teacher, and much beloved by his pupils. He died at Eisenach, 1561, aged sixty-four, of a paralytic affection ; and his wife Margaret, who had been married to him twenty-seven years, died of grief the same day, and they were both buried in the same tomb. He was distinguished by his munificence to the poor and uncommon modesty.

(d) Calvin, April 4, 1532, published his Commentary on Seneca's Epistle on Clemency, when he was only twenty-two years and nine months old. The perverse, and amusingly erroneous statements made by Varillas concerning this work are so numerous and altogether unfounded that we need not wonder at Bayle, when he says, they are calculated to make a person think of renouncing for ever the study of history.

(e) Margaret de Valois, queen of Navarre, distinguished for learning, piety, and a firm attachment to the reformation, was born 1495, and died, much esteemed, at Castle Odos, December 2, 1549. She was of great use in affording protection to John le Comte, James le Fevre, to a relation of Melancthon, and many other reformers ; as also in writing religious tracts, and counteracting in some measure the advice given to her brother Francis I., king of France, by his chancellor and counsellors against the friends of the reformation. Though she did not agree with the principles of Poquet, Quintin, and

Copin, leaders of the Libertines in Hainault and at Lisle, yet she was displeased with Calvin for attacking them, as she had received them into her household. Our reformer's letter, written to her on this occasion, is distinguished by a truly Christian boldness and independence, which is combined with due respect for the rank and piety of the queen. "Who would excuse me," he writes, "if, when I hear the truth of God assailed, I should remain silent? I do not believe you expect me to prevaricate in the defence of the gospel committed to my ministry for the purpose of pleasing yourself. May the Lord protect you by his shield, and direct you by his Spirit to pursue his vocation, even unto death, with a sincere zeal and prudence."

(f) James le Fevre, of Estaples in Picardy, was of small stature and low extraction, but distinguished for genius and learning. He received his education at Paris, and was useful in assisting to put an end to the barbarism of the schools. He took the degree of doctor in divinity. Briconnet, bishop of Meaux, patronised him; but he was compelled to go to Blois and Guienne to escape persecution, and finally to Nerac, where he died, 1537.

Le Fevre clearly discerned the certain approach of the reformation, though he wanted courage to join its standard. "How shall I stand," he observed to the queen of Navarre, "before the bar of God! I, who have preached the gospel of his Son to so many, who have followed my doctrine, have met a thousand torments, nay, death itself, with constancy—while I, their teacher, fled—fled from persecution, and have lived to the age of 101, although death, even in its most appalling horrors, ought never to have excited even a shudder in my frame. Yet feeling and knowing this, I privately withdrew myself, and basely deserted the post assigned me by the Lord of glory." When the queen and her friends comforted the weeping patriarch by assurances of the forgiveness of his Saviour, who was prepared to bury in oblivion all his unfaithfulness; "Nothing," he added, "remains for me but to depart to God, as soon as I have made my will; nor ought I to delay; for I think God has called me. I appoint you my heir; I bequeath all my books to your chaplain; my clothes to the poor; and I commend the rest to God." "What," said the queen, smiling, "shall I get by being your heir?" "The office," he said, "of distribution to the poor." "Be it so," replied the queen; "and, I declare, this inheritance is more pleasing to me than if my brother, the king of France, had nominated me to all his possessions." The

countenance of the old man brightened, and he said, "Now, O queen, I require some rest; may you be all happy! meanwhile, farewell." He lay down on a couch, and fell into a gentle dose. One of the party, after a little time, went to awake him, but his spirit had departed.

(g) Gerard, and Arnold Roussel, of Picardy, William Farel of Dauphiny, James le Fevre, first preached the doctrines of the reformation in France, under the patronage of the Bishop of Meaux, in 1523, where the first Protestant church was established. They ordained Peter le Clerk over a congregation in Meaux amounting to 400. He was whipped, branded, and banished by the Roman Catholics, and, after preaching at Metz, was burnt. The other four ministers were banished.

(h) The Princess Renee, daughter of Lewis, was distinguished for her steady and cordial attachment to the reformation. She returned from Italy to France in 1560, after the death of her husband, the Duke of Ferrara, in 1559; and she openly professed the reformed doctrines at Montagris, where she died in 1575. She afforded protection to oppressed Protestants with noble heroism and perseverance against the persecution and superstition of the church of Rome.\*

(i) Paul Fagius, in a letter to Calvin, from Cambridge, in 1550, thus writes:—"Few parishes in England have proper pastors, and most of them are sold to noblemen. Some clergymen hold three, four, or more parishes without doing ministerial duty, and substitute such as are unable to read English, and who, at heart, are mere papists. In some parishes no sermons have been preached for many years. The greater part of the fellows of colleges are violent papists, or dissolute Epicureans, who endeavour to entice the youth to their own systems. The Government refers the case of the church to the bishops, who declare they can make no alteration unless authorized by the public law of the kingdom. Any interpretations of the most luminous passages of the word of God are given, which either prudence or pride may suggest. Admonish the Duke of Somerset concerning the pillaging and betraying of the churches in this kingdom, that his majesty the king, whose proficiency in science and literature is astonishing, and who exerts all his power for restoring the truth as it is in Jesus, may hasten the reformation." Calvin was indefatigable in doing his utmost to rouse Archbishop Cranmer to appoint effective and evangelical ministers, to prevent

\* See Dr. M'Crie's excellent History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy.

the open sale of livings, to introduce proper discipline, and to publish a clear and luminous confession concerning the various controversies. "To speak freely," our reformer writes, "I much fear, and this fear constantly recurs to my mind, that so many autumns will be passed in delaying, that the cold of a perpetual winter will succeed." How melancholy is it to reflect that the church of England, after the lapse of nearly three centuries, still continues in a state which requires the adoption of many of the reforms alluded to by Calvin. The affairs of the church are postponed from year to year; and while great efforts are making to introduce improvements into the state, nothing, or less than nothing, is attempted for placing the cause of the religion of Jesus upon a sure and lasting basis. How few clergymen visit their parishioners from house to house for the purpose of knowing the actual state of those intrusted to their care! How few bishops visit every parish in their diocese for the purpose of making themselves personally acquainted with the character and exertions of the pastors over whom they are appointed! What heart-burnings are caused by the collection of tithes! How few parishes have the advantage of electing their own clergymen! And shall it be said that it is of more importance to have the power of appointing a representative for parliament, than to be enabled to choose their own shepherd to lead them in the way of everlasting life? In what state is the religious education of the whole community? How many thousands, and tens of thousands, never enter the church from year to year! How many in the country are either totally indifferent about religion, or deists, or in a state of doubt and uncertainty! The division between the church and the dissenters is not diminishing; and how is it possible for a religion of love to flourish where feuds, opposition, jealousy, or rooted dislike exist? Men may talk about Christianity until the earth itself shall be burned up, but it never can—it never will prosper in any country, among any people, unless true, disinterested love unite all classes—all denominations—all parties, in the bonds of Christian affection. Love, the new commandment, which our beloved Redeemer left as a legacy to his disciples, must either abound among us, or we are as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal.

At a period like the present, when the most gigantic strides are making to communicate useful knowledge to all classes of the community, it is the bounden duty of every child of God to leave no means untried by which the doctrines of the gospel may be extensively disseminated in all their fulness, and

all their glory. The history of all states connected with the church clearly establishes one important fact—that affairs, which relate to the gospel of Christ, are never attended to, until the interests of the commonwealth have been first consulted. No great hopes, therefore, ought ever to be entertained of much good accruing to the church from the interference of the state, since the prosperity of the former will, in all human probability, always be postponed to that of the latter. Governments forget that the God of Israel is he, who giveth strength and power unto his people: blessed be God.

(k) Calvin, in a letter to Farel, says of himself, “that he was not of that passionate race of lovers, who, when once captivated with an external form, eagerly embraces also the moral defects that it conceals. I expect chastity, frugality, patience, and solicitude for my personal health and prosperity, in that lady who delights me with her beauty.” The Rev. Mr. Robinson, of Cambridge, in his Ecclesiastical Researches, attacks Calvin for marrying an Anabaptist without ever making the slightest allusion to her own conversion, or that of her husband. This is merely one specimen of the numerous false statements concerning Calvin, with which this uncandid and unfair historian has thought fit to delude his English readers.\* Calvin had one child, who died in 1545, and he could not be more than five years old. Calvin, at the close of a letter to Virel, consoles himself on this occasion in the following manner:—“The Lord has inflicted a heavy and severe wound on us by the death of our little son; but he is our Father, and knows what is expedient for his children.” Mrs. Calvin ejaculated on her dying bed the following expressions:—“O glorious resurrection! God of Abraham, and of all our fathers! not one of the faithful, who have hoped in thee for so many ages, has been disappointed: I will also hope.”

(l) Beza’s remark, that Zebedee’s confession of his error was a better decision than if a thousand decrees of the senate had issued these orders, proves how desirous even the advocates for persecution are to secure a triumph to their cause without having recourse to such an irrational and shocking system. Even the most inveterate disciples of the church of Rome are not now disposed to go all lengths in advocating the Inquisition, and other horrid methods of cruelty, by which Antichrist has for so long a period kept his slaves under the most dreadful thraldom.

\* Yet Robinson adopts as a motto—“ Let every thing said or written against truth be unsaid and unwritten ”

" Almost every page of ecclesiastical history is polluted with the blood of men sacrificed on the altars of bigotry and intolerance. That is deemed heresy, in every age and country, which is opposite to the doctrines of the established church. We have at present oppugners of the doctrines of the establishment ; and though they are not burned for their belief, yet they are by some spoken of with disrespect, and tolerated with reluctance. Notwithstanding this, the present church of England, we are confident, had she the power, would be as far from treading in the sanguinary footsteps of the former church of England, as the British Legislature would be now from granting her that authority of doing it, which was so superstitiously conceded to her in an age of ignorance, and ecclesiastical domination."\* The period is fast arriving when every thing like intolerance on religious subjects will be banished from our shores, and the great principles of immutable truth be supported, not by the iron arm of power, but the invincible evidence of reason, religion, and love. Party names and distinctions, whether arising from establishments or other causes, will be merged in the glorious appellation of Christian, and the doctrines of the cross be supported and extended, as they were in the first ages of the gospel, by the wisdom, industry, piety, sobriety, purity, and holiness of its professors.

The crimes of nations and of ages will, it is to be hoped, henceforth be viewed in the glass presented to us by the Friend of sinners, and no attempts be made to gloss over the transgressions even of the best of men, by apologies derived from the ignorance, or superstition of the period in which they lived. Future ages, no doubt, will look back with wonder on the infidelity, immorality, drunkenness,† and Sabbath-breaking of this boasted nineteenth century, in this boasted land of liberty. It is high time for all Christians to do their utmost among us, to stem the torrent of irreligion and iniquity that is sweeping over our land, and unite in the great cause of promoting genuine Christianity by a spirit of harmony and of concord, which would paralyze all the efforts of its vilest enemies.

\* Bishop Watson.

† The whole amount of spirit and wine-merchants, taverns, inns, beer-shops, &c., in London, consisting of 1,500,000 inhabitants, is nearly 6000, while the places of worship do not much exceed 600. Can Government be said to do its utmost for religion under such circumstances, when the active operations of the ministers of the gospel, compared with those of the venders of wine, spirits, ale, &c., can only be as one to ten ?

An interested selfishness, with which all parties look merely to themselves, is one of the worst and most lamentable symptoms of the present times, since it proves that the cause of Jesus is forgotten, and some paltry worldly objects of the most fleeting nature, preferred to the glory of the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. The same noble disinterestedness, which made Paul support himself as a tent-maker, must resume its dominion among us, if we ever expect to hear infidels and atheists, who now blazon forth their own shame even in our courts of justice, cry out, " See how these Christians love." By showing our faith by our works, the blasphemy of unbelievers would cease, and the powers of a future and coming world resume that authority and influence, which neither scepticism nor infidelity would be able to gainsay or resist.

THE END.







# DATE DUE

JAN 8 '67		
JAN 10 '67		
MAY 10 '67		
MAY 29 '67		
DEC 15 '67		
JAN 8 '68		
APR 19 '68	APR 22 '68	
NOV 12 '68	MAY 3 '72	
NOV 8 '64		
DEC 6 '64	APR 31 '65	
MAR 5 '65		
APR 8 '65		
NOV 5 '65		
MAY 27 '66		
APR 8 '67		
NOV 28 '67		
DEC 12 '68		
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